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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LAOTIAN HMONG REFUGEES AND  
PROVIDERS OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN MISSOULA, MONTANA

by

Julianne S. Duncan  
B.A., Marylhurst College, 1970

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

Master of Arts

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

1980

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Duncan, Julianne S., M.A., June, 1980 Anthropology

Relationship Between Laotian Hmong Refugees and  
Providers of Social Services in Missoula, Montana

Director: Frank B. Bessac

Laotian Hmong Refugees have been settling in the Missoula, Montana area since the fall of the Royal Lao government in 1975. As of January 30, 1980 there were approximately 600 members of that ethnic group in Montana. A complex social service system has developed to aid in their resettlement.

This thesis is an attempt to explore the goals and the political processes used for reaching those goals of the Laotian Hmong refugees and of the American social service providers. Both the goals and the political processes are compared and contrasted.

Ethnographic participant observation and interviewing were used to gather the data on which this thesis is based. A total of 44 refugees of various social categories and lineages were interviewed. A translator was used in all refugee interviews. A total of 45 service providers were interviewed. In addition, numerous meetings of Hmong community elders, of social service personnel meeting separately and of both groups meeting together were attended. Data was gathered over a two year period ending January, 1980. Intensive observations were carried out between August, 1979 and January, 1980.

It is concluded that the goals of the Laotian Hmong refugees and the service providers have coincided until now but may diverge over the problem of family members having to leave the family in order to get jobs.

The conflicts which have arisen have come up primarily over the methods of achieving goals. Refugee decision-making processes have not been accepted as legitimate by significant Americans until the refugee organization has taken on the appearances which Americans consider those of a legitimate organization. The American service system has also changed in response to pressure of need for service by becoming more formal and efficient.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It does seem to me that it took a lot of help from quite a few people to get this thesis out of me. Now that it is done, I can forget the difficulties and remember instead the friends who helped me over them.

Without the interest of Susanne Bessac more than anyone else, I would have bogged down even before starting. While mine is not the direction her researches have taken her, this is really her thesis too.

Mua Cha, Moua Xang and many, many Hmong refugees have spent much of themselves explaining their world to me. Through the Youth Employment Service of the District IX Human Resources Council I was able to pay a translator. I thank them.

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## INTRODUCTION

Laotian Hmong (also called Meo, Miao) refugees have been settling in Montana since the fall of the Royal Lao government in 1975. Americans in the Missoula area have provided help at first in a personal way and gradually developed a complex system of social services to aid in the re-settlement of these refugees.

In a world in which refugees seem to be constantly fleeing from the clashes of philosophies and the clashes of power which mark the interactions of governments, it seems to me to be useful to look at the processes by which one group of refugees settles in one small American community. Broadly speaking, this thesis is an attempt to do that.

The Laotian Hmong and the American service providers each have specific histories and cultural assumptions which influence their goals for the long term settlement of the refugees and which influence the processes by which goals are reached.

For this thesis, the Laotian Hmong refugee goals and political processes are examined and are compared and contrasted with the goals and political processes of the network of service providers in Missoula. Participant observation and interviewing were used to collect the information upon which this thesis is

based. Observation of the resettlement process has taken place from January, 1977 to January 1980. Interviewing of both Hmong refugees and American service providers was done between August, 1979 and January, 1980.

This study is limited to the Laotian Hmong refugees' goals and does not consider the Lao nor the Vietnamese refugees in the area. By far the greater porportion of refugees in Montana are Hmong. As of October 31, 1979 the entire refugee population of Montana was 618 (Indochinese Refugee Reports, 1979); 417 of these were Hmong (Mua, 1979). Since the Hmong are of different ethnic and cultural background than the Lao or the Vietnamese or other groups of refugees who have settled in the United States in the aftermath of the Vietnam war, statements concerning their goals and political processes should not be presumed to apply to all Indochinese refugees without investigation.

Although the Hmong have settled both in Missoula and in the Bitterroot Valley, the service network described and analyzed here is confined to Missoula. This is an arbitrary limitation. Many of the programs described for Missoula are also available in the Bitterroot Valley but the decision making and planning is primarily done in Missoula and some of the services are actually provided by the Missoula service network.

This thesis is presented in two parts. In the first the goals and political processes of the Laotian Hmong refugees are described and analyzed. In the second, those of the service providers are similarly described and analyzed. A concluding statement compares these, highlighting the similarities and dissimilarities and suggesting trends which have appeared and which may have implications for social service planning.

Since this thesis necessarily presents a broad picture of refugee/service provider interaction, it cannot look in depth at any one aspect of refugee goals, authority structures, or agency programs. I hope that it provides a coherent enough picture of the interaction of the two groups that others can do more specific research as needed.

## CHAPTER I HMONG REFUGEES

The Hmong, as they call themselves, are referred to as "Meo" or "Miao" by the Vietnamese, Lao, and Chinese. For centuries they have inhabited the mountainous country of southwest China and northern Indochina. Recently they have come to inhabit the mountainous country of western Montana as refugees from the wars in Southeast Asia.

Coming from the mountains of Laos to the mountains of Montana, the Laotian Hmong have left behind one kind of life to try to build for themselves a new life in America. The goals, the dreams they have for themselves, form the base from which they make their day-to-day decisions. In this section of this thesis, I intend to describe their dream insofar as I have been able to understand it, a few of the ways by which they try to reach the goal, and some of the major problems they are encountering. This, of course is something which could fruitfully be investigated for 20 years with still deeper understanding awaiting just one more interview or one more line of inquiry. However, this thesis might acceptably stand as an overview, an outline of a complex situation, which can serve as a starting point for someone who can follow many of these ideas much further. In this thesis, I intend to concentrate on an overview of the "dream" and the

interaction of the refugees with the American providers of social services in their attempt to realize their dream.

To understand these things I have tried to get information in several ways. I have reviewed the ethnographic and some of the historic literature on the Hmong in Asia, both in Indochina and in southwest China as well as the small amount of work available on Hmong refugees in the U.S. Over the past two years, I have attended four major meetings of the Hmong families in Missoula as an observer, taking note of the topics discussed and the way they tried to solve problems which had come up. With a translator, I interviewed a total of 44 Hmong refugees in Missoula and in the Job Corps in Darby using a list of questions devised with the help of the director of the Lao Family Community, Inc. Once the interview information was written up he also reviewed it and he and other Hmong community leaders who speak English clarified some points and in general offered further information about Hmong goals and problems in their life in America. Although the information merely skims the surface of many areas of Hmong thinking about their future and their approach to building a satisfactory life in the U.S., I believe it is accurate as far as it goes.

## Ethnographic review

Western ethnographers and Christian missionaries have recorded their observations on Hmong culture in China, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. Some of the earliest in the 1910's deal with groups contacted by missionaries in Szechuan, Yunnan, and Kweichow provinces in China (Clarke, 1911). Others, either missionaries or anthropologists, studied Hmong groups in the same provinces at a later time (de Beauclaire, 1948; Graham, 1937a,b; Lin, 1940; Mark, 1967; Mickey, 1947; Ruey, 1960). Anthropological studies of Hmong living in the highlands of Thailand have been published (Bernatzik, 1970; Chindarsi, 1976; Geddes, 1976). Missionary observations (Andrianoff, 1976) as well as anthropological and linguistic studies (Lemoine, 1972; Barney, 1967) have been published on the Hmong of Laos. In addition, a few studies have been done on the Hmong refugees in the U.S. (Bessac, 1978; Dunnigan and Vang, n.d.; Hadas, 1979). A few historians have made studies which touch directly or indirectly on the Hmong in China or Indochina. (Deal, 1971; Halpern, 1964; Holborn, 1957; Wilkison, 1970).

From these sources, a general view of Hmong culture can be put together although each specific group studied is reacting to a specific local

environment and group of neighbors. Hmong speak a tonal language called Miao, which is classified in the Miao-Yao branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family (Voegelin, 1977:227-228). Recent missionary efforts have resulted in a Roman alphabet to write what had always been an unwritten language.

Some sources suggest that the Hmong were an identifiable group living in China as early as 2000 B.C. However the Chinese term "Miao" may simply mean "non-Chinese barbarian" and may not refer to this specific ethnic group. By the T'ang dynasty (618-906 A.D.), however, ancestors of the Hmong were definitely living in what is now Kweichow. During the Ming dynasty (1367-1644) Chinese colonists were moving into the area, forcing the Hmong to retreat to the hilly land. During Manchu times (1644-1911), Hmong possibly acquired their sub-group identity based on colors as the Manchu divided various peoples into sub-groups under different colored banners. In any event, Hmong are variously divided into red, flowery, green, white, magpie and many other sub-groupings. Some of these groups speak different dialects and most have distinctive costumes. The Montana Hmong are either of the white, green, or striped sub-groups each of whom has distinctive women's costumes. Green Hmong and white Hmong are the names of different dialects spoken

in Laos and in the U.S.

Over the centuries, with the advance of more and more Chinese settlers into what is now Southwest China, the Hmong had to retreat to the mountainous country with steep slopes and relatively poor soil if they wanted to retain their identity as an ethnic group. Rather than continuing to use the paddy technique for growing rice on fertile valley floors, they adopted a slash-and-burn or swidden farming system in which they would migrate to a new area once the soil was exhausted near their village. With village migration taking place every ten to fifty years, Hmong groups gradually migrated as far south and west as northern Thailand and Burma. Two kinds of rice were generally grown as well as maize and a variety of vegetables. Depending on the area, livestock was raised too. Some wild plants and animals were used for food and medicine. Generally, Hmong groups were self-sufficient and maintained their independence both in China and in Indochina by inhabiting wild sparsely populated areas and having very little contact with other groups (de Beauclaire, 1960; Clarke, 1937a,b; Lin 1940).

The Hmong traditionally have had a shamanistic religion in which they believe that most living things and some inanimate things have a soul or essence with power to interact with other spirits independently of



the body which the spirit inhabits. Men's essences can leave or be influenced for good or ill by the spirits of animals, other people or of places or things. A shaman is a person with the power to communicate with spirits and possibly to control them. Many Hmong groups were very receptive to the message of Christian missionaries who began to work among them as early as 1900 and who are still active among them today. They did not participate in Buddhism, Taoism or Confucianism even though these religions (or philosophies) were practiced by many of the people of the areas the Hmong traditionally inhabit. Most of the Hmong who are now in Missoula were not exposed to Christianity until quite recently and most still believe in their traditional religion. There is, however, some interest in Christianity here and in the refugee camps in Thailand.

Since the social structure and social organization of the Hmong have been described more thoroughly than many aspects of their culture and since these aspects of their traditional life have a direct bearing on how they adapt to life in America, I will provide a more complete review of the ethnographic literature on both social structure and on kinship terminology as it reveals social relations among the members of a group. In much of the ethnographic literature dealing with the

social organization and kinship terminology of the Hmong they are noted for their cohesiveness and their strong group identity and resistance to pressure for assimilation (Wilkison, 1971; Bernatzik, 1970; Burney, 1967; Whitaker, 1972). For centuries they have lived in close contact with Han Chinese civilization and have been subject to its advances. Yet they have not been assimilated but have either retained or developed a strong sense of ethnic identity. Kinship terminology for the Hmong has been recorded by Ruey Yih-fu (1960) in Szechuan province in China in 1943. The Hmong group he visited he called the Magpie Miao and says that they are the same people as David Graham calls the Chuan Miao (1937). Jacques Lemoine (1972) recorded kin terms in a village in western Laos during field work in the 1960's. Other ethnographers and observers have recorded social systems in various Hmong groups in Laos and Thailand. Ruey includes observations of other aspects of social structure in his analysis.

Hugo Bernatzik (1970) records observations made during the 1930's in northern Thailand. G. Linwood Burney (1967) did linguistic work in Laos in the 1950's and has published observations on social structure. William Geddes (1976) observed Hmong society in northern Thailand during the 1950's and 1960's.

Timothy Dunnigan and To Fu Vang (unpublished manuscript) have done linguistic and ethnographic work among the Hmong refugees in Minnesota since 1975. In discussing social structure of Hmong society, each of these observers has noted that the Hmong are a well-organized, cohesive group and each has noted some sort of patrilineally organized society with a clan type of structure as the widest social grouping and the patrilocal extended family as the smallest.

Bernatzik states that the whole family is organized by father-right. The largest grouping is the sib by which he seems to mean clan as it is now defined. The basic unit of society is the large extended family which has both ritual and economic functions. The Hmong in Thailand at the time of his study lived in isolated independent villages which moved about every ten years.

Harney also dealt briefly with social organization of the Hmong living in Xieng Khouang province in Laos. He mentions but does not define a patrilineal clan system as the dominant social unit. The basic unit of the social structure is the patrilineal extended family or household. He does not distinguish between these two. He states that many people have a lineage name within the clan but states that these lineages seem to have little function. The village is the next larger

unit after the household and is made up of several households. The village headman is usually the oldest head of household in the village.

Whitaker, et al (1972) in the U.S. Government Area Handbook for Laos repeat essentially the same information as Bernatzik and Barney. It seems likely that they may have based their information on these two sources. They add that the Hmong are the most politically astute and best organized of the tribal peoples of Laos.

Ruey is also brief in his descriptions of the Hmong social structures but he does define them more carefully. The residential unit is the patrilocal extended family of the small or lineal type. This usually consists of parents, their unmarried children and their married sons with their wives and children. When parents die, the married sons usually establish separate households though they may continue to live together. A localized patrilineal kin group consisting of families of men who share the same surname is the core of the hamlet, though families with other surnames may also live there. A cluster of such hamlets generally makes up the village which is the basic political, economic and social unit of the society. Overlapping the village structure is a patronymic surname group. With mandatory exogamy and special

ritual obligations, Ruey considers that it approximates a patrilineal sib, now called clan. The local group of the clan corresponds to what we now call a segmentary lineage. Essentially, then, Ruey sees a Hmong social structure characterized by village organization with patrilocal residence, exogamous patrilineal clans and localized segmentary lineages.

Geddes gives a more complete description and definition of the social groupings among the blue (same as green) Hmong of Thailand. He was primarily interested in their economy, so his description emphasized relationships of importance to the economy of the group. In a general sense, society consists of all Hmong as a distinct group from everyone else. Hmong may marry any other Hmong except of their own clan and do not marry non-Hmong except in unusual circumstances. They do perceive distinctions between blue Hmong and white Hmong but all are equally Hmong and do intermarry.

Within Hmong society, Geddes distinguishes several different relationship categories based on descent and based on locality. He emphasizes the nuclear family as a unit unlike any other ethnographer. Nuclear families, however, rarely live alone but almost always in a patrilineally extended family. This extended family includes parents, unmarried children and married

sons with families. Geddes equates the extended family with the household since women who marry in are part of the extended family. The household or extended family is a distinct grouping from the lineage. The lineage is a cohesive group who acknowledge a common group of ancestors. Some people may belong to a household but actually acknowledge a different group of ancestors--wives, for instance, retain allegiance to their own lineage ancestors. Lineages are generally shallow, remembering perhaps only two generations of deceased members. As time goes on within a lineage, the relations between a group of brothers who formed a core will become less strong and the old men will depend more on their sons. This new generation of brothers will form the core of the lineage. Geddes states that the active household heads are the men in the 30-40 year old age range. This orientation to the present and future rather than the past keeps the lineages fairly shallow. The breakdown of lineages into new lineages thus seems to be a fairly easy process and seems to reflect a fairly flexible social situation.

Clans are probably the largest social grouping of the Hmong. They have ceremonial responsibilities and provide spiritual security for members. Clan members have general social reciprocity across all Hmong

society. Clan names define who may marry whom, but do not have any overall organization beyond a village level. Geddes includes what he calls sub-clans as groupings within the general clan which have rituals which distinguish them from other clan sub-groups.

A village will usually be made up of a number of households. Households of the same clan or sub-clan may cluster but a village will generally include households from a number of clans. The village is the political unit which deals with the central government and usually is also a spiritual unit since it is large enough to support a shaman.

Overall, Geddes sees a Hmong person with a fairly wide range of social relationships based on two major principles--descent and locality. Descent groups include the nuclear family, the lineage and the clan and sub-clan. Residence groupings include the extended family or household and the village. Where the two overlap, the relationships are the strongest. When they do not overlap the ties of locale are likely to be stronger than the ties of descent. For example, a man is more likely to depend on his wife's brother if he lives near than on a clan-mate who lives far away. He is most likely to depend on members of his own lineage who live in the same village.

Timothy Dunnigan and To Fu Vang in a manuscript dealing with the relationship between language and social relations accept Barney's description of the kinship groupings noted above. In addition they give Hmong terms for these groups: the clan, xeem; the lineage, cas neeg; the extended family, pab neeg; and the residence group, tsey neeg. Clan or xeem is used to mean people of the same surname who are descended from an unknown ancestor and who share a ritual way of worshiping ancestors. This term corresponds to the usage of clan for all the ethnographers who discuss this concept. The cas neeg corresponds to lineage as most ethnographers discuss it. The pab neeg corresponds to the extended family or family line of Geddes or to the hamlet of related people of the other ethnographers. The tsey neeg refers to the people who form one household whether a nuclear or extended family.

The consensus of all these opinions then seems to be that Hmong use patrilineal kinship groupings and patrilocal households to form their social groupings. The household is the most restricted unit with the people living in the same house who also share descent having the closest social relationship in the society. This would be groups of brothers or father and sons. The extended family may or may not correspond to the



household. The lineage will often comprise members of several extended family households all of whom are descended from a known group of brothers. The clans are exogamous surname groups whose members often cannot trace any exact relationship but assume relationship based on membership in the clan. Each ethnographer emphasizes a different social grouping as most important. The general impression is that the Hmong are fairly flexible in their use of these overlapping relationships emphasizing different relationships as needed.

The descriptions of structure given in the ethnographies take very little account of any relationship outside the father's family at all. Geddes does say that affinal relationships are often called into account in deciding where to relocate a household or in deciding to move a village if the soil is exhausted in one area. Chindarsi (1976) in a study of Hmong religion notes a number of rituals in which either the wife's relatives or mother's relatives play an essential part. It seems probable therefore that social relationships are more balanced than a listing of the recognized kin groups would lead us to believe.

In an analysis of the kinship terminology recorded by Ruey and Lemoine several patterns emerge. Each system recorded is from a different dialect group of

Hmong and from widely separated places--China and Laos. Yet the systems are almost exactly the same except in the designation of grandchildren.

This is interesting in light of anthropological literature which suggests that the kinship terminology system generally reflects the current social practice of the groups who use them. If two different relatives are called by the same kinship term--brother, cousin, father or whatever--this generally means that they have the same social function. If father and father's brother are called by the same term, then it can be assumed that they each act the same way toward the speaker. (Graburn, 1971). Other studies of changing kinship terminologies have shown that systemic change is rare and usually occurs only over long periods of time and then under extreme pressure from another society. (Eggan, 1971; Brunner, 1971). If Hmong kinship terminology recorded in China in the 1940's by Ruey was essentially the same as that recorded by Lemoine in the 1960's in Laos it can be suggested that the same system of social relationships prevailed in both groups. Local kinship usage seems to follow the same pattern except some Lao words are used for some relatives. This indicates that the system of social relationships has not changed significantly from the traditional pattern discussed by Lemoine and Ruey. By

analyzing the kinship terminology of the Hmong, several suggestions can be made about their social structure which corroborate the observations of the ethnographers who studied their social systems in Asia. Some of these may also provide insight into the ways the Hmong are adapting to life in America.

The elements of the kinship terminology system which are of most interest in trying to understand affective relationships are the terms used for siblings and cousins in the speaker's generation and the terms used for members of the parents generation. The speaker calls his brothers and sisters by exactly the same terms that he uses for his father's brother's children, his parallel cousins. All other cousins whether on his mother's or father's side of the family are called by a different term which indicates that they are outside the lineage. Essentially then, fellow members of the lineage who are often raised in the same household are all brothers and sisters. All brothers however are distinguished by a modifying term which indicates whether they are older or younger than the speaker. Father and father's brothers are all called by the same term also with different terms used for all other uncles. Again these terms are modified by whether the man is the oldest, youngest or has some other position within the sibling group. This suggests

that father and his brothers all stand in the same relationship to the speaker.

These patterns suggest two things about affective relations among family members. Siblings and cousins in the same lineage--who are often raised in the same household--deal with each other as brothers and sisters and deal with all the members of the parent's generation who are similarly lineage and household members in the same way as parents. Since the relationship between brothers forms the core of the household, this provides a fairly large group of people who can depend on each other for support.

The fact that older and younger brothers are distinguished from each other indicates that greater respect is paid to older siblings who are higher in the order of descent--closer to the core lineage head that every one is descended from. Compared cross-culturally this is a characteristic of societies with segmentary lineage type of social organization. Often these are societies which are capable of organizing themselves rapidly and well under conditions of stress (Bessac, 1965). I have already noted that a number of ethnographers have remarked that the Hmong are among the best organized of the tribal peoples of Indochina. The kind of relations indicated by their system of kinship terms may suggest why this is so. They have a

core group of people who can depend upon each other for help but there is a way of recognizing status differences so that leaders can emerge.

The indications of ranked descent contrast with the clan-system in which all people are equally members no matter whether they are descended from the oldest son of the oldest son. Since the information we have on the Hmong suggests that they have both shallow lineages and a clan-type organization, it is reasonable to suppose that different aspects of their social structure are emphasized under different circumstances. Possibly this very adaptability contributes to the survival of the group.

In summary, from what we can read of the social structure of the Hmong, the group of brothers forms the core of a household and of the shallow patrilineage. Over time one generation of brothers will be replaced by their sons as household heads and lineages will gradually split. Heads of households, men in the 30 to 40-year-old range, form the political core of the village and relate to the outside world as a group. A clan system operates to regulate marriage and spiritual matters. Relations outside the patrilineage are little discussed but the implication is that relations with wife's and mother's family are of some importance and are called into play when needed.

## History of the Montana Hmong

Hmong began migrating into Laos approximately 100 years ago, possibly in the aftermath of the Tai-p'ing rebellion in Southwest China. When the French governed Indochina they depended heavily on the cash crop of the Hmong--opium--to underwrite their colonial budget. In the 1950's when Communist activity began in the area, the French army began to depend on the Hmong as a well-organized fighting force to combat insurgency. The U.S. took over when the French left in the mid-1950's, intending to support the non-Communist government of Laos. A few Hmong were close personal advisors to the King of Laos or were representatives to the Royal Lao Government. General Vang Pao the only Hmong officer in the Lao army, was recruited by the CIA to fight in Laos. Supplied with U.S. weapons, the Hmong fought mostly in the Plain of Jars region of central Laos. Some Hmong were recruited by the Pathet Lao and now are part of the coalition governing Laos. This division of loyalties within the Hmong resulted from a family quarrel between the Ly family who supported the Royal Lao government and the Lo family who support the Pathet Lao. General Vang Pao was allied with the Ly family and the many of Hmong allied with the non-Communist forces.

It was during this time that the Laotian Hmong were contacted by missionaries from the Christian and Missionary Alliance and large-scale conversions took place. Catholics had contacted Hmong previously but the large scale conversions took place during the mid-1950's with the Missionary Alliance. It has been suggested that the Hmong participation with western military forces and with western religion were related in an attempt to tap some of the power of the west to help them retain their own identity and freedom in relation to the peoples around them (Andrianoff, 1976). Many Hmong in the U.S. were and are Christians having been converted either in Laos or in the Thai refugee camps. Few of the Hmong in Missoula happen to be people who participated in Christianity before their arrival although a few are interested in it now. A native Hmong has been brought to Missoula by the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church to conduct services for those Hmong who are members of the church and to do missionary work among those who are not.

The Hmong under General Vang Pao were a strong fighting force allied with the U.S. in the Indochina war until the fall of Laos in May 1975. Some estimates put the Hmong casualties in the fighting at 20,000 or more (Karnow, 1979:23). When Laos fell some Hmong were able to escape to Thailand immediately; many more were

not. General Vang Pao bought a ranch in the Missoula area where one of his nephews was studying as an exchange student. The man who was eventually to become the leader of the Hmong community was also in Missoula as an exchange student at that time. Those Hmong who made it to Thailand were settled in refugee camps in the north and began the process of applying for permits to get to the U.S. Some came fairly quickly, reaching Missoula in late 1975. Others have waited in the refugee camps for as long as four years.

Many Hmong were in northern Laos at the time of the Communist take-over. A few who had no connection with the General or with the war may have been allowed to continue farming unbothered. Most Hmong, however, because of their ethnic group's alliance with the U.S. and reputation as anti-communist warriors, were slated for execution if they stayed in Laos. According to some Hmong who have received word from relatives either in Laos or who have recently escaped from Laos, Hmong villages are strafed and poison gas is dropped on Hmong villages or on groups of Hmong who are camped in the jungle trying to escape. According to recent news reports, mustard gas is being dropped on Hmong villages or encampments by either the Pathet Lao or the Vietnamese using Russian planes (Safire, 1979). Hmong are shot if discovered trying to cross the Mekong River



which forms the border between Laos and Thailand for part of its length.

Those who couldn't escape just after the collapse of the government have continued to try to escape so refugees are arriving frequently in the refugee camps. One family now in Missoula was in the north when the government fell. Father and son with each of their families separated and began to make their way to the border. Each day they paid a Lao family to hide them and each night they paid someone to transport them one step of the journey further. Many families who tried this were turned over to the Vietnamese but both father and son and their families made it across the border and were reunited in the refugee camps. Another Missoula family walked and camped in the jungle since they had no money to pay to get out. They spent many days going the wrong way once out of their home territory since they didn't have money for guides. By good luck they found their way to the river and used bamboo sections as floats to get across the river. Many others who try the same thing die of exposure, are caught by the Vietnamese or are shot trying to cross the river. Some among who don't have money to escape borrow it and once in the camps send a general appeal to Hmong in the U.S. to send money so they can repay their friends or guides for their escape.

For the most part, the Hmong prefer to come to America rather than remaining in Thailand or emigrating to France, Australia, or Canada. Some of course do choose one of these other courses, but according to Hmong community leaders here most Hmong do not even consider doing anything but getting to America. None of the people I interviewed had even thought of settling anywhere but in the U.S. although some do have relatives in France.

Now that their families are here, few Hmong choose to live anywhere else. But the original refugees wanted to come to America because of its amazing wealth and technology and possibly because of the power of the West, the power of America.

Remaining in Thailand was an option for a few people if they had relatives already in Thailand. Otherwise the Thais were not inclined to want the Hmong settling in large numbers on their border with Laos. They and the Lao both felt that the Hmong would continue to fight a guerilla war in Laos from bases in Thailand. This would provoke the Pathet Lao and the Vietnamese to enter Thailand to exterminate guerilla bases and would lead to war between Thailand and Vietnam or Laos (Brown and Zasloff, 1978, 1979; Stuart-Fox, 1979, Weatherbee, 1978). To prevent this sort of scenario from being played out, the Thais have

kept the Hmong in rigidly restricted refugee camps, fenced and patrolled by soldiers and dogs. The Thais have continually pressed for Western nations to accept the Hmong for permanent resettlement so they could eventually close down the refugee camps and remove a source of irritation between themselves and Laos. (Kolborn, 1975).

Even some refugees who may have had a choice of settling with relatives in Thailand preferred to come to America, though, because of the technology, power and wealth of America.

Many Hmong did emigrate to France, especially if they had worked for the French or spoke French. According to community leaders here, more Hmong had contacts with Americans or had worked for Americans and so applied to come to America. Few people had any knowledge of Canada or Australia although some Hmong have settled there.

At the present time, Hmong are still escaping from Laos and entering the refugee camps. More and more of these are applying to come to the U.S. to join friends and relatives already here. Within the U.S., Hmong have settled in 13 states. As of November 20, 1979 the total Hmong population in Missoula was 320 and in all of Montana was 417 (Mua, 1979).

### Hmong family meetings

In trying to understand what the Hmong as a group need or want to make a good life for themselves and how they solve problems as a group, I have attended several meetings of the Hmong families. These meetings are called usually to deal with some specific problem but ordinarily they also deal with any community concern. Any Hmong who is interested in attending does so, with each family usually having some representation. At the meetings I have attended there were between 50 and 100 people present.

The first meeting of this kind which I attended in winter, 1977 was called because some rather serious problems had arisen with the welfare department social services. Some of the Hmong children attending Head Start had apparently been reported to the welfare department as victims of child abuse. The Hmong families as a group were really worried about this since the social worker had recently done some things which they viewed as dictatorial and had aroused antagonism between herself and the Hmong. They were worried that this was a follow up on her part, a way to interfere in Hmong families. Removing the children from the home had been mentioned as a possibility although the parents of the children involved had not been interviewed yet.

Whether or not the Hmong were correct in their perception of the situation, they were indeed extremely worried about it. I presume that the welfare department staff were also very worried if they seriously suspected child abuse. The only topic of business that evening was the general difficulty with dealing with social services and what possibly could be done about the situation. It was decided that a meeting with the social worker and her supervisors would be appropriate to try to explain how problems of this sort are usually handled in their families. Two men, including the man who would eventually become Lao Family Community director, and some American friends were settled on to talk to the welfare department personnel. After several meetings a method of handling these things in the future was worked out which involved the Hmong having a board of elders to provide counseling and the welfare department trying this avenue before any legal interference in families.

A meeting in the spring, 1978 was called to discuss further problems with the social worker. A number of misunderstandings had arisen because the social worker had no translator when talking to the refugees. When a translator was hired finally, though, she still did not use his services as a translator but had him do other jobs instead. The two of them got

along so badly that the translator was either fired or quit. To replace him, the social worker wanted to hire two young girls; the Hmong community wanted her to hire someone with more standing in their community and someone who could speak better English. Once hired, they hoped that this person would be used to translate for the social worker so people would really understand what she was telling them. A long discussion of the subject was held with no solution arrived at except to offer the social worker the names of several people who would be acceptable so she would not be in the position of seeming to have someone else tell her what she should do. The social worker herself arrived at the meeting and this suggestion was made. The upshot of this particular disagreement was that the two girls were not hired nor were any of the others proposed to her found to be acceptable. Not until fall, 1979 was anyone found who was acceptable to both the social worker and to the Hmong families. Other business was discussed at this meeting but I did not have a translator.

A third meeting was called in very early spring, 1979 because the representatives from the International Rescue Commission would be in town to handle any business which concerned them. Representatives from Head Start also attended this meeting since many

problems had come up with transporting the children to Head Start. The Head Start hassels were handled relatively quickly and in addition a meeting was arranged between the entire Head Start staff and the Hmong parents so that Head Start could better understand Hmong culture and try to include in their program the goals that Hmong parents have for their children.

The main discussion with the IRC representatives was the difficulty the Hmong are having learning English the way it was being taught at the vo-tech and further difficulties between some Hmong families and the social worker from the welfare department. The consensus of opinion on the ESL program was to request the vo-tech to include more grammar in their classes since the Hmong had previously studied language in that way if at all. Hmong members of the vo-tech advisory council were expected to speak for the community and some American friends who were present agreed to also make the suggestion. In addition they wanted to ask for one bi-lingual staff member to teach the beginning classes since many things go much more quickly if they can be explained first in Hmong. A Hmong man was hired as a teacher's aide by the vo-tech although this wasn't an entirely satisfactory experience for either the ESL program or the young man in question in the long run.

The ESL staff did institute one class in English grammar also.

Since difficulties with the social worker were continuing after almost two years, this was considered to be a much more serious situation. No one thing was considered to be a problem by itself, but a combination of many little things was increasing the gulf between the social worker and the refugees. The feelings the Hmong expressed at this time were that she was too brash and dictatorial, that she told people to do things they did not want to do without any explanation why it was necessary. By being too brash and hasty she jumped into situations which were not problems and stirred things up and caused problems. On the other hand, she was very helpful in arranging doctors' appointments, filling out welfare applications and arranging day care--all things that were very difficult for Hmong families to do on their own. Families felt themselves to be caught in a tight spot. The IRC representatives tried to explain the workings of government agencies. It seemed to me as an observer that there was confusion on the part of the Hmong about the connection between the two government operations of financial assistance and social services and between the government operations and the person of the social worker. This confusion was furthered by the actions of



the social worker which seemed to the Hmong to be completely arbitrary and irrational.

A third problem discussed at this meeting was the difficulty with understanding about jobs--how to find them, how to act, and everything bound up with working.

The final consensus at this meeting was that the Hmong would form an organization and apply for a grant to provide job counseling and supplementary social services to refugees since they could thereby avoid some of the communication difficulties which seemed insurmountable otherwise. In addition the IRC would apply for a grant to provide job counseling for refugees in Missoula. Both groups would work together to make their requests supplementary rather than duplicating each other's request for funds.

The fourth meeting of significance was held in October, 1979. At that time both the IRC office and the Lao Family Community, Inc. office had recently opened. Services provided by each were described as were services provided by a Hmong nurse at the health department and those provided by a Hmong social service aide at the welfare department. The only unresolvable difficulties discussed were the continued problems with transportation and the continued difficulties with understanding the structure of the English language.

The vo-tech no longer had any bi-lingual staff to explain things to beginning students. Plans were made for the New Year celebration and the meeting was adjourned.

Two kinds of things can be learned from the reports of these meetings. The topics discussed give some indication of the things which have been major problems for the Hmong in adjusting to life in America. In addition the pattern of decision making becomes clear--the way Hmong try to resolve difficulties as they arise.

In analyzing the few meetings I have attended, a common pattern emerges which also corresponds fairly closely to that described for Hmong decision-making in Asia. A problem arises involving some kind of public situation. All families gather to discuss the problem and reach some consensus on how to handle it. One person or a group of people is designated to represent the community to the outside forces, whoever they are, to try to solve the problem.

The group operates as a group in relation to members of the outside world. Problems are solved by consensus and at least in Missoula the need to operate as a group, to stand together has apparently overridden any tendencies toward conflict. Since the households

have been fairly mobile traditionally, the families who do not agree have usually been able to move to another village where they get along better. There is some reason to suppose that this could happen here too but since I have been observing, no open breaks between people have been allowed to develop. The importance of agreeing as a group, especially in this strange country, has been emphasized over other things.

Authority only exists because the group agrees on a course of action and designates someone to carry out the acceptable solution. This person, according to Hmong community leaders, is chosen for personal qualities known to members of the group. Whoever can best solve a problem is chosen to deal with the outside. According to people here, there is never a fight for this position since everyone here knows everyone else and they all can agree who should handle some difficulty. Locally, this has always been the same man for the two years that I have been observing. General Vang Pao occupies a similar position as leader of the Hmong but he operates on a national scale. Problems that are too big to handle in Missoula are taken to him. He was present and spoke at the first meeting I attended dealing with child abuse, but the man who has become leader of the Missoula Hmong community was expected to talk to the authorities after

the meeting.

This manner of decision-making, of resolving problems with outside governments, parallels the political structure described in the ethnographies. Household heads gather to discuss a situation, a headman is appointed to deal with the government for the village. The Hmong in Missoula say that they dealt with the government of Laos in a similar manner. The villagers nominated a chief who dealt with the district government for the village. This chief had to be confirmed by the township chief, thus getting his authority not only from village consensus but also from the central government.

There is some indication that the Job Corps boys also organize themselves in this way and have a spokesman for the group. They suggest that families also function this way with the head of household speaking for the members once they have talked something over.

The public problems discussed at these meetings are the problems which the Hmong see between themselves and outside government forces. Although other meetings have been held, these four are representative of the way they are conducted and of the problems discussed, according to the man who has presided at most meetings.

The one problem which has either been the major focus or at least a topic of discussion at all but the last meeting is the difficulty of dealing smoothly with the social worker from the welfare department. Her apparent dictatorial attitude has remained a constant factor to deal with. Unlike some of the other problems which are either solved or can be put aside and ignored, this situation has worsened over the last two years. The agreed upon solution has finally been to form an organization themselves which will be recognized by other agencies as capable of providing some of the necessary social services especially things involving communication between Hmong families and some sort of government service. Over the period of time spanned by these meetings there were at first crisis situations with the social worker which had to be dealt with; then general agreement that nothing would change until they no longer needed any of her services; finally the opening of their own office to handle any problems that might arise in a way that would be officially recognized by other government agencies.

Other things have come up from time to time. The ESL classes seem to be a regular, continuing source of confusion. The solutions suggested by the Hmong which have been tried by the ESL program have not really worked for some reason. This problem seems to have

been set aside for the time being as something which cannot yet be figured out. At the October 1979 meeting, the ESL classes were brought up as a problem but the group agreed that "we can't worry about everything just now" or something to that effect, and the problem was not discussed.

The Head Start difficulty was solved in short order. A few problems with AFDC checks were handled with no difficulty. The worries about jobs continue but in the IRC office is an employment project which may relieve some of the problem. Transportation is a headache which no one has any solution for at all.

#### Interview procedure

In trying to understand what kind of future the Hmong envision for themselves-- what they would like their life to be like--there were several basic areas I tried to explore in each interview.

In devising the questionnaire or more accurately, guide to questioning, I consulted the community spokesman on questions I should ask and how they should be phrased. From discussions with him and from listening to discussions at meetings of Hmong families, we determined four areas in which people were under stress or in which changes were having to be made to adjust to American life: family life, economic

attitudes, job attitudes and ethnicity. Of course by trying to get information on all these topics it is not possible to cover any one in depth. Since this type of questioning has not been done before, it seems that an overview is appropriate rather than focusing on one topic before the scope of interests and worries is understood.

Once the questionnaire was written, the community spokesman reviewed it and made further suggestions of topics or questions which might be interesting. It was understood that any information I collected was to be used by the Hmong in planning their service program, in grant applications or for any purposes they wanted. Once a list of topics was decided upon, I began working with the young Hmong man who was my translator, to explain the kind of information needed and why so that he would know what kinds of questions to ask during interviews. Each week during the two months that we conducted interviews, we met once a week just so I could go over the questions I had or the things that I did not understand fully. We could also discuss any questions people did not seem to understand so that we could make any changes in the questionnaire or in the questioning procedure.

A total of 44 people were interviewed during approximately two months. At that time the total Hmong population of Missoula was approximately 280 people including children.

The categories of people interviewed are as follows:

Number.....	Category
24.....	Single young men
3.....	Single young women
1.....	Widow
7.....	Male household heads
6.....	Wives
2.....	Old men
1.....	Old woman
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44 total	

The only factor which needs explanation I think, is the discrepancy between single young men and single young women. At the time we were interviewing, there were only three single young women in the entire Missoula refugee community. This discrepancy is explained in part, according to my translator, by the fact that families try to get their sons to the U.S. first to begin getting an education and that girls can follow later with the rest of the family.

Another kind of category which I consider significant in trying to get an adequate sample of the population here is to have a fair representation of different lineages.



As of November 20, 1979 the following table shows the representation of different clans in Missoula: (Hua, 1979)

Cha.....	10 people
Lo.....	20 people
Lee.....	25 people
Moua.....	103 people
Thao.....	11 people
Vang.....	79 people
Vue.....	8 people
Xiong.....	8 people
Yang.....	56 people
TOTAL.....	320 people

The families I interviewed represent the following

clans:

Moua.....	3 families
Vang.....	2 families
Yang.....	1 family
Lee.....	1 family
Thao.....	1 family

Single young men not interviewed in a household represent the following clans:

Cha.....	1
Cheng.....	1
Chang.....	1
Chieng.....	1
Lee.....	1
Moua.....	4
Seng.....	1
Thao.....	1
Via.....	1
Xiong.....	4

This is probably a fair representation of the population but the picture is really a bit more confusing than categorizing by clan names would indicate. To say that alliances are within the patrilineage is correct as far as it goes but it is obvious that it is too simplistic a way to think about

the categories within the local Hmong population. For instance, one Vang family was sponsored for entry to the U.S. by the wife's father and brothers who are all Moua and thus have a close affinity to the Moua lineage. The other Vang family has no relationship with the Moua clan at all. Nor are they in the same lineage as the General's family even though they share a clan name. One of the Moua heads of families is a widow and all her children are Thao. Thus categorizing people by clan name is not entirely adequate to make sure that people interviewed are not really in the same family. However, it is the recognized way that the Hmong divide themselves up and so will have to suffice for the time being.

Interviews took from about one hour to three hours in length and were conducted in the family home for all the Missoula residents. The job corps interviews took from 1/2 hour to 1 hour and were conducted in the dorms or classrooms of the job corps center. Appointments were made ahead of time for interviews and in most cases most family members were present at least part of the time. All interviews were conducted through a translator even when some family members spoke English.

All questions went from me to the translator to the household head when interviewing in families. When I tried addressing questions to individuals, everyone

was acutely uncomfortable and did not answer. When I addressed questions to the family as a whole through the head of household everyone chimed in on the answer and discussed it thoroughly with him before he answered.

In many cases people were going in and out all the time. We might start an interview with one person present and an hour later have five or six people listening and giving opinions. When they spoke English, this was very useful to me in getting a better understanding of the topics being discussed. When they spoke Hmong, my translator was usually not able to keep up but usually he could explain later.

The areas I tried to explore in questioning are family life, economic attitudes, job attitudes, ethnicity, general worries and problems and who has helped with a problem.

Regarding family life, I asked a variety of questions:

1. what kind of spouse would be ideal for either self or children,
2. how many children should people have,
3. what kinds of things would they hope their children would excel at,
4. what is the role of each spouse in a marriage,

5. in what way do these things differ in America from Laos.

Regarding economic attitudes, I asked:

1. what constitutes wealth,
2. what obligations do rich people have,
3. if you had a lot of money saved up, how would you use it,
4. in what way do these things differ in America from Laos.

Regarding job attitudes, I asked:

1. are you working now or have you worked since arriving in the U.S.,
2. how did you make a living in Laos,
3. do you have any idea what kind of job you'd do in America,
4. if not:
  1. do you prefer to work alone or with other people,
  2. do you prefer to have your own business or to work for others,
  3. do you prefer a blue collar or office job,,
  4. do you prefer indoor work to outdoor work,
  5. do you prefer Hmong or American co-workers or both;
5. in what way are your ideas about making a living different in America than Laos.

In exploring ethnicity, I asked:

1. what makes Hmong people distinctive,
2. what makes them different from other peoples in both the U.S. and Laos,
3. now that they are in America, which of their own customs is it most important for the children to know,
4. in what ways should they become like Americans,
5. how should they make sure that the children know the important Hmong customs.

When asking about worries and problems, I asked:

1. what are your problems in general, what things do you worry about most,
2. what problems have you had to deal with during the past year or since you've been in Montana,
3. who helps you with general worries,
4. who in particular helped you with specific problems,
5. are these things different in America than in Laos.

In addition to these things I got specific family information:

1. names,
2. approximate ages,
3. where they came from,
4. who sponsored them,
5. who and where their relatives are,
6. how long they have been in the U.S.,
7. how long they were in the refugee camp,

8. what other countries if any, they applied to come to besides the U.S.

Family life is an area of concern for the Hmong since American expectations of family behavior and assumptions about families are somewhat different from traditional Hmong assumptions. They are having to make some adjustments in the face of American expectations and are using many traditional family strengths to cope with life in America.

Hmong have traditionally used patrilineal kinship groupings and patrilocal households. According to my informants here, the social structure described by the ethnographies for Hmong groups in Asia, is an accurate description of the social structure of Hmong groups in America. The strongest affective bond is between groups of brothers. (A consensus of opinion in one household is that I am doing my son a serious disservice by having only one child. He really must have brothers.) Brothers can always depend on each other for help while they are growing up and when they are adults. This bond extends to father's brothers' children too but is strongest between children of the same mother. Brothers share everything completely without even having to ask. Girls not yet married depend on their brothers for help and support in much the same way. After they marry this changes somewhat

but there is still a close bond.

The family system has had to be modified in America somewhat because housing here is not designed for large families. But groups of brothers with their families live in the same town or in nearby houses or apartments when possible. Of the people I interviewed, all the married people expected their sons to live near them once married. All the young men except one hoped to live near their parents and brothers if they could get jobs near each other. The one exception is a young man whose parents are still in Laos. Generally, old people are cared for by the youngest son of the family when they can no longer take care of themselves, but this is flexible. Every person interviewed expected this pattern to continue. The American emphasis on independent nuclear families has not had much effect on Hmong families yet. However for official welfare purposes and similar things, all nuclear families are noted separately usually by the social worker rather than by the Hmong family.

In the ethnographies relations with in-laws are not stressed at all, nor are they discussed by Hmong families when talking about their relatives. However, I noticed that many men had sponsored members of their wife's family and were living near them. In my very limited visiting, it seemed that visiting back and

forth between households seemed to be approximately as common between affinal relatives as between patrilineal relatives. When asked specifically about this some people stated that the sister's family were often very close friends.

Marriage traditionally took place between two young people with different clan names who married because they liked each other. This was the pattern which has been followed by all the people I interviewed although marriages arranged entirely by parents were also possible. Spouses could choose each other after having grown up in nearby hamlets or villages, or by a young man of marriageable age travelling to other villages at New Year to meet girls. Sometimes traders or other travellers carried pictures of young women to distant villages. Everyone who discussed marriage stressed that young people marry because they like each other the way people in America do.

For unmarried young people in America the expectations based on this pattern are not too different but there are some difficulties in carrying it out. One important factor is that there are more young men in America than young women. This discrepancy is obvious in Missoula although more girls have arrived recently. I do not have figures for other communities but the young men assure me that this is



indeed a problem. According to my informants this has come about for two reasons. Young men have been sent to the U.S. when possible, before the rest of the family, to begin getting an education and to begin working if possible so that they can take care of the family when they do arrive. Also, before the war ended, many more young men than young women were living in Vientiane so that they could go to school even though their families remained in the north. Since they were so close to the border they were able to escape more quickly than the people who had to make their way south.

Young men do go to other cities for visits to other groups of Hmong and young women do send their pictures with their sister-in-law or anyone visiting another city. In one conversation about these things both young men and young women expressed a wish for their parents to be more helpful about this since it was much harder to meet other young men and women in America than in Laos.

Both males and females stressed that the ideal spouse is a hard worker. In Laos this meant a good farmer for those living in the mountains or in Vientiane a good student or someone with an "easy" (an office) job. In America, the ideal spouse is about the same but more emphasis was placed on being a good

student. Unmarried people with few exceptions said they were too young to think about this. Of the few young men who expressed an opinion, three merely said "a hard worker" and one said both "well-educated and a hard worker." One single young woman said that the ideal spouse is someone with education or job training who is a good person, not getting drunk all the time. By this I think she means someone who is considerate of her and who puts the interests of his family before his own fun.

Parents all, without exception, thought that the ideal spouse for their children would be someone who works hard. When exploring the concept of "hard worker" in some conversations I got the understanding that people definitely do not mean someone who has a good job or makes a lot of money. These ideas are really not concepts that the older people are familiar with at all. Even the younger people say that having a good-paying job doesn't have much to do with being a hard worker. Rather, I think they mean someone who is known not to be lazy or irresponsible. Going far in education seems to have something to do with being a hard worker since those who work hard will do better than those who do not. However, some people are just smarter than others and all can equally be hard workers.

Wives should usually be responsible for caring for children and keeping the house clean. Men do the heavy outside work. Of the people I talked to all the married people thought that either or both spouses could have a job out of the home. The expectation was that the husband would surely get a job however, and the wife if she could. In one family it was explained to me that women are ordinarily too shy to deal with outsiders while men are generally brave. Individuals may differ in this but generally this would be the case and so ordinarily the husband would have to find a job. Unmarried people declined to comment on the division of labor within families at all.

Children are all raised to be able to do all household chores so that by the time a boy or girl is 10 or so they could take care of any household chore and fix the meals for the family if the parents are tired. Men seem to take an active role in child care in all situations I have observed although this is primarily the responsibility of the mother or the grandparents if they are present. When children are around everyone takes a hand in soothing them or rocking them and they are allowed to play quite freely among the grown ups.

According to my informants, these patterns are not different in America than in Laos except in regard to jobs outside the household. In Laos, jobs were not common for either men or women since most people made their living by farming.

#### Economic and Job attitudes

Because the Hmong were traditionally self-sufficient farmers in Laos, they were not used to a strictly money economy when they first got to America. Job attitudes are bound up with attitudes toward money and these two areas were thought by the community spokesman to be areas of great stress and worry for the refugees as a whole. To understand their vision of their future, it seems important to understand how they expect to cope with these stresses.

Those Hmong living in the mountains in Laos practiced slash-and-burn agriculture. They raised all the food they needed and had very little contact with outsiders. Many families had some members living in Vientiane either farming in the rural areas near the city or working for the government. Of the families I interviewed, five had continued to live in the mountains until the end of the war and three had lived in Vientiane with the man working for the government. Of those who had lived in Vientiane, two had farms or

gardens which the women took care of and only one had to purchase most of their food. In Missoula, all the families I talked to had large gardens.

In the U.S. families begin receiving welfare payments almost immediately. They also receive a lump sum of money from their sponsor when they first arrive to pay rent, buy household goods or whatever they need. If people have trouble managing money, I am not aware of it either through observation or interviews. Members of an extended family share money with each other with no obligations to repay. If one brother needs to buy a car but does not have any money then his brothers who do have money will buy the car or give him money for the downpayment. If he doesn't have money for a payment then his brothers will give him some. The car belongs to the brother who purchased it even though the money for buying it came from other brothers. He has no obligation to pay the money back. But at some later time, if he has money and his brother needs it he will give it to him with no hesitation also without expecting repayment.

People who are members of the same lineage can ask for small amounts of money--say \$50--in this same way without worrying about repayment. But the expectation is that they have brothers and should ordinarily get help from them. If a person from the lineage who was

not a brother needed to buy a car or something very expensive, he might borrow money with the expectation that he would repay it when he could without interest.

If a sister is not married, the same arrangement applies to her as to brothers. Once she is married, her husband's brothers are the ones they should get help from. However, if a married sister needs something and her husband's brothers are not able to help for whatever reason, then either her brothers or father will provide money, a car or whatever help is needed.

All of these kinds of arrangements depend, of course, on who has money and how much is needed and so on.

Between other people money can be shared or can be lent without interest if there is no relative who can be asked to help. Most of my informants thought this possibility quite remote though, since there is ordinarily someone available who is related. But the example was brought up of people who escape from Laos who have borrowed money to do so. They send a generalized appeal to all Hmong communities in the U.S. for anyone who can to send money. The community usually takes up a collection and sends the money even if they do not even know the people.

When there is a community project such as the New Year celebration, the matter is discussed at a community meeting and a decision is reached as to how much each family should contribute. For example, for the 1979 New Year party each family (extended family) was expected to contribute \$25, and each single young man was expected to contribute \$15 or however much he could afford. The community spokesman is in charge of carrying out the arrangements for collecting the money and preparing the party.

The Hmong I talked to did not distinguish between rich and poor people but rather stressed that all Hmong were about the same. If someone is richer they have better food and a better house and when someone goes to visit they give them better things to eat and drink. When they in turn go to a poorer person's house they are given the best the family has to offer. Sometimes the poorer man is embarrassed. These statements seem contradictory but I think that they are trying to stress that there are no social classes among the Hmong even though some people do have more money. In relation to Americans, Hmong think they are poorer now because they have not been here long enough to get good jobs. However, they stressed that the Hmong and Americans are like each other because everyone is equal, there are no social classes. This is in

distinction to the Lao who are very status-conscious. No matter how I asked the question, no one I interviewed could think of any rich Hmong.

When asked what they would do if they had some extra money saved the answers were so uniform I was sure they were putting me on. With only one exception, everyone interviewed said first they would buy a car then a house with a yard. This includes everyone from a 13-year-old girl to old men. The one exception was a man who had been in the U.S. only one month and was just baffled by such a question. The uniformity of answers was not so strange after I talked it over with the community spokesman.

A car is seen as a necessity if people are going to work or go to school and transportation is seen as just an incredible hassle for everyone. This has been discussed from time to time at family meetings and the only solution any one can think of is for everyone who has any money to buy a car as soon as they can. So everyone wants a car.

"The house with a yard" seems to get at the very heart of what people really long for. People feel that they need a house if they are going to have a family and people have a strong desire to have a family. By "having a family" they mean having all the family from



old parents to the little babies living together. This need not be in the same building but in two or three adjacent buildings with room for children to play safely. When they have this people can really have a family. As it happens, the Missoula Hmong as a group have talked at some length about buying some land where each family could have a house and a garden and where children could play safely without bothering the neighbors.

The ideal situation according to several of the Hmong household heads who have been in the U.S. longer, would be to have between 15-30 acres near Missoula but outside of town. Each family would need at least one acre so they would have farm or garden land and room for their house. People would have either log houses or mobile homes depending on what they can afford. The houses would be separate from mobile homes since they don't look good together. Each family would own their own land and make their own payments. If one family can't make their payments then maybe another family will have money to buy them out. If they want a fence around their part, then they will put it up. If they have animals or chickens they have to be careful that the animals do not get in someone's garden.

If this could happen, then the old people could all live there and the little children would be safe all day and not bother anyone. The men and women who have jobs could go to work, the children to school and everyone would return in the evening. This way no one would forget how to speak Hmong and the old people could tell the stories to the children.

The fact that as a group they have talked about this and tried to figure out how to get the land explains why everyone answered in the same way. Every family would not need to participate in this but they could do so if they wanted to and could get the money to do it. People of any lineage could participate. There is some reason to believe that Hmong families come to Missoula because this kind of a plan is possible here and not possible in big cities.

That this particular plan was discussed in Missoula explains the wide spread sameness of the answers. However, the job corps boys are not all from Missoula and have not necessarily participated in discussions of this kind. They too gave similar answers to the questions about what they'd do if they had money. Of those job corps boys who answered this question six said they would like a house in a small town or in the country outside a medium sized (like Missoula) town. Four said they would rather live in

the city. Two job corps boys said they preferred not to live in an area with many Hmong families. All the others wanted to be around many Hmong families.

The key to having a family is of course to have enough people with stable good-paying jobs so that people will be able to keep up on payments. Without that the whole thing would fall apart.

Jobs are seen by most of the Hmong as a key to getting the things they want most. In order to have a real family at least some of the members must have a good-paying job. By good-paying they mean enough to support all the family including the old people and nephews and whoever else is part of the family. The young men and heads of households feel pressured to get good jobs more than the women or old people. Every head of household interviewed who was not employed (7) stated that the thing they worry about most was supporting their family. They feel that they need to do something about that right now but have little idea how to do it.

Of the young men interviewed, many (17) also were concerned with getting a good job. But they are not under as much pressure to do this immediately since they are not yet married. The young men value education far above immediate entry into the job

market. The feeling expressed by those who discussed this, both heads of households and young men, is that the married men must work now at any job they can get to support their family. The younger men in their late teens and early twenties must get as far as they can go in education so that they will be better able later on to provide for families. For example, one young man at the job corps was just finishing his training as a cook when I interviewed him. Because of his excellent performance, he had been nominated to go on to advanced cook training. But because he had one blind eye he could not be accepted. The job corps then offered him two options: a good job as a maritime cook at which he would make a reasonable amount of money or opportunity to go on to college. In spite of the advice of the job corps staff to take the job, the young man chose to attend college. To his way of thinking the advance in education was a much better thing than to start bringing home a paycheck. He intended to study electrical or mechanical engineering.

This emphasis on the value of education is not something that began upon arrival in the U.S. In Laos too, many of the young men had been living in Vientiane with relatives there and attending secondary school. Girls also attended school if their families were living in the city but did not go to the city

specifically for schooling as boys did. Two or three of the young married women in Missoula had attended or completed high school before leaving Laos. Entry into secondary school was by competitive examination, so only the top students who finished grade school could attend secondary school. While in secondary school, a student had a major such as teaching or some other field so that upon completion of secondary school he was prepared for a career. One of the reasons that some informants said they wanted to get to the U.S. was so that they could get education. Before the war ended in Laos in 1975, two Hmong were exchange students in Missoula. Two of the household heads I interviewed had completed secondary school in Laos. One of these had been employed as a forester, one in the weather bureau.

The picture I get from questioning and from more general conversation with informants is that the Hmong as an ethnic group were interested in achieving a higher status in the status-conscious society of Laos. One of the ways they were going about doing this was to get as many young men as well-educated as possible. Families would support and encourage a young man to do well in school and continue in education as high as he could go. Any girls who had the ability and interest in getting an education were encouraged also. But with

boys, many were sent from their families in the mountains into the city specifically for education. This emphasis on education for boys is also reflected in the fact that teen-age boys were often the first members of the family to be sent to the U.S. so they could continue or begin education. This emphasis also partly explains the very high popularity of the job corps for the young men. At the job corps they are simultaneously getting education and job training and in an accelerated course so they are able to advance more quickly.

The emphasis on education for young men and on jobs for household heads is tied in with the strong desire to have a family with all members living near each other and functioning together economically.

Although the overall picture fits together fairly well, when people were asked specifically how they intended either to get a job or what kind of education or training they were planning on people were much less sure of themselves. In almost every case the only answer that any one gave was that they would finish whatever they were currently involved in before thinking about the next step. For example, if a man was currently studying English at the vo-tech, he would say that he had to learn English. Then when he knew English he would learn a job. If a young man or woman

was attending high school, he or she would say that they would finish high school and then decide the next step. A similar kind of response was typical of the job corps boys except they are already involved in some specific training. Even then they would say "I have to finish my training before I can think about where I can go for a job" and so on.

There were only a couple of exceptions to this pattern among the people interviewed-- the emphasis was quite striking.

In trying to get at the root of this phenomenon, I talked to the LFC director and several men who happened to be in the LFC office while I was there and in addition talked to the people who work in the Employment Project in the IRC office. Several things seem to contribute to this typical response to questions about someone's specific future plans.

First of all this is common for all Hmong in either interviews or in conversations. They do not like to say specifically what kinds of hopes and plans they have for their own future. This is a kind of conversation that is reserved for talking only to a cousin or favorite brother. American conversations in which the first thing people say is "what is your major in school and what do you intend to do when you finish"

are baffling to Hmong students. This sort of thing is simply not discussed so freely among Hmong. It isn't bad luck exactly to talk about what you hope for but a reluctance to put yourself forward and a feeling that you will be very embarrassed if what you say doesn't work out. Among the members of the community this generally works well enough since everyone knows more or less who is smart or who is good at something. By acclaim the best person will be chosen for something without having to say himself that he would like to do something or that he is good at something. The people who work in the Employment Project have come up against the same difficulty in trying to get Hmong to tell what skills they have or what kind of things they know which they can use to help them find a job.

In addition to this major barrier to getting specific information about people's future hopes is the problem that most of the people here have been self-sufficient farmers and have not ever really spent much time thinking about what kinds of jobs there are in the world and what kinds they would be good at. The teen-agers are much more aware of these things than the older men but the older men are the ones who feel the pressure to have a job very soon. And what a job is and how much you can expect to earn and how you get it are brand new problems to many of them.



## Ethnicity

By ethnicity I mean a people's definition of themselves in relation to other groups of people. The Hmong are an ethnic group distinct from the Lao, from the Tai-dam, from Americans because they have cultural characteristics by which they define themselves.

For example in Laos different ethnic groups living in the same area dressed differently, used different languages, practiced different religions or had different subsistence patterns and so on. Ethnicity is a shifting thing, a subjective concept of group self-identity.

According to my informants, in Laos the Hmong as a group were looked down on by the ethnic Lao as were most of the hill tribes. However, as a group their status was improving for two reasons. The Hmong were the best soldiers in the fighting against the communists and so were valued highly by the King of Laos. And the Hmong were getting an education and getting involved in working in government administration. In raising their status the Hmong were not losing their identity as Hmong and assimilating into Lao culture but instead were using group characteristics--a reputation for being good soldiers--to raise their status as a group. The degree to which

each person in the ethnic group participated in this process of course does vary. But when asked specifically about this, several community leaders agreed that this is a fairly accurate description of the trends taking place in Laos.

The fact that as a group they are now in America does not entirely interrupt the process of raising their status in regard to the class system of Laos. Many dream of the day that they can return to Laos and with the education and experience they have gained in America step into a higher social position in that country. Most men say that this is really only a dream with very little chance of happening but still it would be a wonderful thing and it is important for the young men to keep this in mind when deciding what to study in college. This aspect of their view of themselves as a group still influences decisions individuals make about their own futures.

From asking informants about the things that define them as a group now that they are in the U.S., the characteristic everyone mentioned first was language. Physical appearance also distinguished Hmong from Americans but it was generally agreed that no matter what people looks like if their language is Hmong then they are Hmong. Some people thought this was a very strange question indeed--How ever could a

Hmong be anything but a Hmong? If they live in America and become citizens then they would be both Hmong and American just as in Laos they were both Hmong and citizens of Laos without becoming Lao.

Other people did not consider this such an off-the-wall question. Some had thought about this a bit and were somewhat worried that their children would not continue to know about their own culture after living in America for a long time. In these conversations, the solutions mentioned were to make sure the children learn to speak Hmong and listen to the stories from the grandparents. If necessary they should have classes after school or during the summer to learn Hmong traditions. Two specific things were mentioned as traditions to emphasize. First, Hmong should make sure that the children understand the traditional family pattern and the family values. The other specific relates to this --the Hmong family names must be continued. In two different households the consensus of opinion after much discussion was that if a Hmong child had a Hmong clan and lineage name and understood who his family was then he would retain what was essential about being a Hmong. Children can have American first names and this would have absolutely no bearing on being Hmong.

In the U.S. the Hmong should adopt many American customs according to most of the people I talked to but few people were very specific about which customs they should adopt. Things having to do with laws of course must be accepted. In addition, in three households people discussed the American emphasis on freedom and equality. This characteristic is something that the Hmong themselves have always emphasized and one of the important values they appreciate about America. This makes Americans and Hmong like each other and makes them both different from the Lao who are a very status-conscious people. This is a difference between Americans and communists too since in communism the government tells people where they have to live. In America people can live where they want just as the Hmong are used to doing with their farms in Laos.

One discussion of these kinds of things involved religion also. Christianity is the American religion and some Hmong are quite interested in what the teachings are. At the time I did not explore this very thoroughly but later conversations lead me to think that some of the older people are very thoughtful about the traditional spirits of their own religion and the power of Christianity. In Laos, many missionaries had been received by the Hmong and some people had become Christians. (Barney, 1967; Andrianoff, 1976). Few of

the Hmong now in Missoula had been exposed to Christianity but some had been. Whether or not they are interested in becoming Christians, these ideas were discussed in the context of differences between Americans and Hmong and Lao. Some people had decided to either become Christians or continue studying it. Others equally thoughtfully had decided not to do so. Generally, the younger people had less interest in religion than the older people.

One specific custom that someone mentioned was different in America is the custom of the groom's family giving gifts of some agreed upon value to the bride's family as part of a marriage. In America, according to several different young men, the groom's family pays for the party but no longer gives gifts to the bride's family. This corresponds to the American wedding customs.

The only other thing mentioned as a way the Hmong should become like Americans is in the matter of streets and roads. In America all the houses are all lined up and the streets are smooth and paved. If they ever should go back to Laos, they should make their villages have straight smooth streets. If they do purchase a bit of land and have a number of families living in one area, they plan to have straight streets dividing the pieces of property.

### General worries

The last thing I tried to explore was a general question of what problems or worries people had and who they turn to for help either in general and in specific instances. I tried to explore specifically what Americans had provided some sort of help so I could understand refugee reaction to the American social service system.

Of the heads of households and their spouses everyone said that the thing they worry about most is how are they going to support their families in this strange system. One man said, "I feel like a new baby that can't even talk but I have all these people to take care of. Everything is new and I have to learn everything." Others expressed similar sentiments in a variety of ways. Several went on to say that they got very frustrated trying to learn English because the way the language works does not make sense to them. This increased their worry about supporting their families. It seems like an almost insurmountable task to learn the language and then to start from scratch and learn a job.

Of the older people, only the widow expressed any particular concerns. She is worried about finding a good husband for her daughters since she has no sons to

cure for her when she is old.

Young men and women were not nearly as distressed as the heads of households. They don't feel nearly the responsibility to take care of other people and so don't feel as much stress. Two young men I talked to have parents or close relatives in the refugee camps and they think about nothing else except to get them out of the camps and to the U.S. If a young person's parents are already here, then they are primarily worried about doing well in school or job-training or whatever they are working at. One young woman was quite concerned about who she was going to marry.

In the interviewing, the distinction between what I called a "problem" and a "worry" seemed to be a distinction between an immediate concern such as housing or a sick child and generalized obstacles such as figuring out how to support a family. Only one person said he had any problems at the time of interviewing. This was a man who had arrived within the month and did not have a large enough house so some of his children had to stay with relatives. His sponsor, a representative of the Lutheran Church, and his father and brother were helping him to look for housing.

The concerns that people identified as problems during the past year or since their arrival in America were few. One family had a hard time dressing their children properly in the winter. They got warm clothing from a variety of churches. One family had a child in the hospital and had used the services of the health department translator. The Job Corps boys did not identify any "problems."

While discussing problems and worries one of my concerns was to get an understanding of who people turned to for help in general and in specific instances. Tied in with this, I wanted to see how they thought about the services provided to aid in their resettlement.

When I asked in interviews who someone turned to for help the standard answer was "Whoever knows about that thing." In questioning there did not seem to be any way to get past that. In exploring this further in conversation and in asking about situations I observed happening I got a little more of an idea what this seems to mean in practice. Everyone in the family seems to turn first to the head of the family no matter what the problem and discusses it first with him. For instance, the widow with two daughters turns to her husband's brother. Young men turn to their oldest brother or to their father or uncle. Even if the



problem is something like what kind of college classes to take, about which the head of the family might be expected to know little, the problem is first discussed with him. Then, if need be, the head of the family will seek further help from an outside source who may have knowledge of the situation. In the case of the college courses, the young man and his oldest brother together had a conference with the young man's advisor.

The pattern as far as I can see, is for everyone to turn to the head of the household for help either with worries or problems. Heads of households seem to consult their brothers if they need help or to consult the wider circle of other Hmong heads of household if necessary. Going to non-Hmong for help is not the ordinary procedure and is usually the responsibility of the household head. In situations of importance to the whole community, the heads of household expect one or several leaders to deal with the outsiders. As with most generalizations, this one does not hold in every instance, but when checked with Hmong men they agreed that this was ordinarily how things would go.

Only a few non-Hmong were mentioned as having provided help with some specific thing or as people to help with general difficulties. This is partly an artifact of the people I interviewed: most had relatives in America before they arrived and so did not

need immediate help from Americans. The people mentioned will be discussed as part of the network of service providers in the second section of this thesis.

My impression from interviews, conversations, and observations of the relationship between Hmong and non-Hmong service providers is that almost all non-Hmong are an outside group to be dealt with in the traditional way. The programs set up to provide help and the various regulations and laws of the state which have to be observed are equally outside forces. These things simply exist and the head of the family or the community leader is responsible to deal with this. Problems and concerns are thought of within the group first.

Although the specific laws and specific individuals to be dealt with are different in America than in Laos, the situation is similar according to the Hmong I have talked to about this. The Hmong are a group who have leaders, members and boundaries. As a group they deal with the state in order to get the benefits they need and in order to comply with the rules of the state.

Another aspect of their relation with service providers is that most of the Hmong who are in Missoula had very little contact with any government personnel

or non-Hmong of any sort while in their villages. In village life any help provided was a matter of personal relations or friendship. So when a person working for the government does something, this is perceived as a personal favor rather than as a right or as an obligation of the government. Those people providing service of any kind are regarded as providing it themselves. In spite of explanations to the contrary, this feeling does not die an easy death.

#### Summary of Chapter I

A house in the country with the whole family gathered together, garden plots, a yard for the children to play, but near enough to a medium sized town for some family members to go to work. Settling down to become part of the economic and social system of America.

Allowing for individual differences and for varied circumstances this describes the hope that the Laotian Hmong have for their future.

With very strong emphasis on education for the younger family members, the economic and social position of the group will rise. They will retain their group identity but will become more and more a part of American society. So they hope, anyway.

This dream for their future in America cannot be separated from the context of their arrival in America. Because of their political stance as a group in Laos they cannot survive there. As long as the political balance in Laos remains much the way it is now, there is no chance for them to remain there and live the peaceful life they desire, nor with the current balance of power can they return to fight as they did in the past with the backing of the CIA.

Although many would like to be living peacefully in the mountains of Laos and some would like to take a position in a non-Vietnamese dominated government of Laos, few of them think that either of these options is possible. The freedom to exist as a group and to live the life they dream of can only be found in America.

The Hmong in Montana have used their traditional social and political structures to cope with American society just as they used these structures in the past to cope with the societies of Laos or China.

Rather than giving up their identity as Hmong and merging, being assimilated into the dominant culture around them, the Hmong have developed or retained their ethnic identity and have dealt as a group with the dominant society. This seems to be true for the Hmong groups living in China for several centuries and is the

case for the Laotian Hmong for the past several decades. This same kind of political organization is used by the Hmong in Missoula to deal with American society.

As a group the community chooses a spokesman who is primarily responsible for interpreting American society and customs to the Hmong and for representing the Hmong to Americans. This is similar to the system which was used in Laos under both the French and Lao and to the system used by the Hmong in China as well.

Hmong society is organized patrilineally with elements of both a clan system and a segmentary lineage system. The strongest affective bonds are between groups of brothers with the main responsibility for almost all decisions resting with the 30 to 40-year-old men as heads of households.

These things operate in America much as they did in Laos with the heads of households agreeing among themselves who would be the community spokesman.

The family and lineage bonds are important for survival here where people share money or necessities of whatever sort based first on the bond between brothers and other relationship bonds. Other relationships, those with wife's or mother's family, while not stressed in the same way are called into play

when necessity arises. The flexibility of the system is one of its strongest points in dealing with the unfamiliar life in America. Although the problems encountered in America are different, the system of who is responsible to meet difficulties and how decisions are made about outside problems, is the same as that used by Hmong in China and Indochina.

With their traditional social and political structures, the Hmong are hoping to realize their dream. Part of the dream is to be able to continue their traditional family and group bonds in the freedom of America. The major obstacle to success in this is economic--people must have stable jobs to support many people and to have space.

therein lies the central dilemma, in my opinion.

The Hmong cultural emphasis on group and family ties is the strongest factor in their dream. They want to be in America so they can have a family in their own traditional sense. They want jobs and education so they can advance economically and socially as a group.

But by placing family and group ties first, by making day-to-day decisions based on remaining near family and on education for further enhancement of the group's status, economic advancement and even economic stability and independence are delayed and the dream

has to wait.

## CHAPTER II AMERICAN SERVICE PROVIDERS

Most social scientists seem to analyze service delivery of any kind by government in the categories that government itself sets up--bureaus, agencies, departments, named and bounded. However, I think that from the point of view of most clients essential services come from a variety of people in a variety of roles and statuses. In the case of some kinds of clientele or services, the providers of services from many different organizations interact with each other in regularly structured ways forming a system of services which can be perceived as a system by both the client and the service providers. I think that a network analysis with the client group as the center of the network might well be a useful way to describe and study such a service delivery system.

This section of this paper will be an attempt to do that. Using a network analysis, I will try to describe the system of services provided in Missoula, Montana to aid in the resettlement of Laotian Hmong who are refugees from the Indochinese war. A number of people in a variety of capacities have been helpful to the refugees who have settled here. The refugee effort began in Missoula in December 1975 when a few concerned people met the first plane with refugees and scrounged clothing, housing, whatever was needed. The network of



services described here reflects the service system as of the end of January 1980. This situation, of course, continues to change as it has since 1975. New refugees are arriving in ever larger numbers and will continue to do so for some time. Any cut-off point is arbitrary. The end of January has no particular disadvantages. No service providers have made any plans to drastically alter their programs on February 1 other than to continue to adjust to the influx of refugees.

In addition to the description of the service system as it stood in January, 1980, I will describe the development of this system from its beginnings in 1975. Any network is a fluid, changing thing and links are formed between members based in part on the interactions which have gone before.

The information upon which this part of this thesis is based was collected using two basic methods: interviewing and participant-observation. From February, 1978 until January, 1980 I was present at a majority of the meetings held for purposes of coordinating refugee services. I have interviewed all service providers in this network to get information about the goals of their programs, how refugee services fit into their other activities, under what conditions and restrictions they provide service, and with which

other service providers they work closely. I have been present as an observer more than as an active participant in most situations. However, I have on occasion offered advice to Hmong on the best way to deal with a situation (not always followed) and occasionally have spoken at meetings trying to explain something from a Hmong point of view. (This only if I was asked to do so by the Hmong.) This has definitely been sporadic but most of the service providers whom I see at meetings and whom I have interviewed would probably connect me with a certain point of view. This kind of involvement is both beneficial and harmful in getting information but any method has its drawbacks and advantages. Since I am trying to describe the interaction and attitudes of the service providers, ethnographic participant-observation seems to me to be a good method for gathering data.

The services provided in the Missoula area to aid refugees are in large part connected with national and international refugee resettlement efforts.

On an international level voluntary agencies cooperate with governments to provide immediate relief for refugees in Thailand, Malaysia, and other areas. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees does not carry out programs but tries to get international cooperation from governments and the voluntary agencies

to provide immediate relief and either to return the refugees to their country of origin or to resettle them permanently elsewhere (Holborn, 1975). For example, the commission negotiated with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to slow or halt the outpouring of boat people into areas already saturated with refugees. They have tried to get many nations to accept refugees for permanent resettlement so that Thailand and Malaysia would not have to absorb all the refugees who could not return to their homes. The United States admits refugees for permanent resettlement. The categories and quotas of Indochinese refugees have shifted somewhat since the beginning of the Indochina Refugee Resettlement Program began in 1975. In general, those people and their families who have worked for the U.S. government are a top priority. People with skills or education are also in a high category and so on down the line (Hohl, 1978). These things impinge on the resettlement effort in Missoula only insofar as they have influenced the kind of refugees who are here and what help they need to settle permanently.

U.S. assistance to refugees has been provided through the Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program originally passed in 1975 and authorized through September 30, 1977. In October 1977 this was extended

on a phase-out basis for four years. This was soon amended to a full funding level but only through FY79.

During 1979 the Refugee Act of 1979 wended its way through the congressional maze and was in conference committee in January, 1980. It was expected to be reported out of committee during February, 1980. This act will provide permanent legislative authority for domestic refugee programs and replaces the IPAP.

For purposes of this act a refugee is defined as "one who is unable or unwilling to return to his country of nationality because of fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion; or, one who has been displaced by military or civil disturbances or uprooted due to arbitrary detention" (Moore, 1979). An Indochinese refugee is one who fled from Vietnam, Cambodia, or Laos. The U.S. definition follows the definition of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees.

The act provides for two things. First it regularizes immigration and naturalization procedures for allowing refugees to enter the U. S. and provides authority for the president to allot an additional number of refugee entries per year if justified by grave humanitarian concern.

The act also creates an Office of Refugee Resettlement within the department of Health, Education and Welfare to administer all domestic assistance for refugees. To receive assistance, a state must submit a plan to the director describing its resettlement efforts in specific areas of concern and must report annually on the uses of funds.

Specific assistance authorized by the legislation includes initial resettlement grants and contracts for services for public and non-profit private agencies; grants and contracts for services to refugees including those promoting economic self-sufficiency, English language training, and health services; assistance for refugee children including special educational services; and child welfare and maintenance payments for refugee children up to the first 3 years they are in the United States or, if accompanied by an adult, until they are 18 years old; and, 100% reimbursement to states for cash and medical assistance provided refugees for the first four years of their residence in the United States (Moore, 1979).

This results in the HEW/SSA regional office in Denver channeling money for refugee services into Montana for two kinds of programs. Regular programs include cash assistance and medicaid reimbursement and social services. This money is disbursed in the state

through the State Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services. Special grant programs include English Language and Employment services for refugees and Mental Health Projects for refugees. These grant awards are made directly to the applicant from the Denver Region Office. All refugee programs in the state funded through these sources are in Missoula. Voluntary agencies such as Catholic Charities and Lutheran Social Services get funding on a national level and use and disperse funds to refugees in Montana.

In general, then, U.S. government policy on refugee resettlement services has been to provide funding for local governments or voluntary agencies who receive grants to provide services. On a local level in Missoula, this makes for a variety of services provided in a variety of ways. Voluntary agencies provide service and local government agencies provide service based on special federal funding for refugee resettlement. For example, the Missoula Technical Center English classes and the International Rescue Committee's employment project are funded through the special grant program. The Lao Family Community, Inc., Missoula Branch and the Public Health Project are funded through a purchase of service arrangement with SRS. Cash assistance, medicaid, daycare and social

work services are provided directly by SRS. Other local government programs provide service as part of their regular job under their regular funding. For example Job Corps and Head Start do this. Some churches have provided service through their traditional funding method of donations from members. Some individuals have provided service strictly as volunteers.

These people and agencies form a network of service providers in Missoula providing a system of services which can be identified as the local resettlement effort.

#### Development of the Service System

The original service delivery system in Missoula consisted of a core of volunteers who became aware of the need for help in a variety of ways. Some had family with military connections to the Hmong in Laos, some were sponsors through their churches, some were friends of friends of friends. In the winter and early spring, 1976, service consisted of meeting refugees at the airport with coats and blankets, finding clothing, getting medical help. Volunteers helped enroll children in local grade and high schools. Each refugee was sponsored by an international voluntary agency who

provided money for initial expenses and notified the local volunteers when a family would be arriving. On a local level no agency, either private or public, had other than volunteers to help the new arrivals. During the late spring, 1976 a local volunteer took one refugee family to the welfare department to see if any kind of financial help could be made available for the family while the father was sick or if there was any help available to pay medical expenses. At that time there was no money available to refugees through the county welfare department even though the IRAP act had passed which provided for federal reimbursement to states for refugee expenses.

During the winter, 1976 a public flare up occurred in which the public health department was worried about the possible spread of diseases carried by the refugees. All refugees were to stay home from school or work or any public place until they could be checked for parasites and other unsavory things. Some of the original refugee friends were able to get local doctors to get the refugees in and checked quickly and thus avoided keeping people quarantined for several weeks.

By summer, 1976, the press of refugees was such that some of the hard core volunteers approached the welfare and health departments to get them to extend service to the refugees. Until that time, Montana had



not applied for any of the funds available under the IRAP. Having medicaid, cash assistance and food stamps available for refugees made that many fewer things the refugees needed to depend on volunteers for. Public health services were also made available to the refugees at that time.

Later in 1976 the Missoula Technical Center applied for and received a grant to provide English language instruction and job training for adult refugees. Also in late 1976 the welfare department hired a social worker and a social service aide specifically to provide services for refugees. The social worker hired was a member of the welfare department financial eligibility staff whose caseload had included many refugee families. Because of her interest in and knowledge of her clients, she was promoted to the position of social worker. The social service aide was a bi-lingual Hmong man. The greater part of their job consisted of getting food and clothing delivered to families, arranging for health services, school enrollment, day care and such services, finding housing and the whole gamut of immediate problem solving.

By the end of 1976, many volunteers were still active with the refugees but some forms of help were being provided systematically by government agencies

with some staff whose only job was to provide refugee services.

Although refugees continued to arrive in Missoula in 1977 and 1978, the influx of new people was not great and those who were already here were beginning to be able to help them. The service situation did not change significantly except that the social service aide at the welfare department quit and was not replaced. Some of the original core of volunteers became less active as some of the services were provided by government agencies or by the refugees themselves.

In early 1978, the health department hired a Hmong woman to translate and to help with the health program for the refugees. The Missoula Technical Center expanded their English language program and instituted an advisory board made up of refugees, agency personnel and interested citizens.

It was in the spring, 1978 that problems began to develop between the welfare department social worker and the leaders of the Hmong community. With no translator, many of the things she said to families were misinterpreted and other things sounded senseless and arbitrary without enough explanation. Since the social worker was working many hours overtime, she

became angry when a family did not cooperate with her arrangements causing even more misunderstanding. It was during March, 1978 that one family was thought by the social worker to be abusing their children. Although she was not able to communicate with the family involved, she did speak to some of the Hmong community leaders. The possibility that the government might move the children to a non-Hmong family even for a short time was cause for concern among the Hmong community. After a community meeting to discuss the situation, a spokesman was chosen to go to the welfare department with a few American supporters to try to resolve the situation with the supervisors of the worker involved. During 1978 and 1979 several incidents arose in which conflict between the social worker and her clientele needed intervention of some kind. During this time no bi-lingual translator was hired. The money was said not to be available and no applicant who suited both the social worker and the Hmong was available.

The Missoula Technical Center continued to be funded to provide English language and employment services for adults each year. The classes continued to grow at a steady rate and the staff expanded accordingly. During the spring and summer, 1979 a bi-lingual teacher's aide was hired at the request of

the refugees. Although the advisory board recommended that the aide job be upgraded to a teaching job if possible and that more bi-lingual personnel be hired, this aspect of the program was discontinued in late 1979.

During this time the ESL staff were expected to do some job counseling and job developing as part of their project. This did not turn out to be a very successful aspect of their program for a variety of reasons, among them the difficulties of just teaching basic English. Annoyance grew with refugees who did not stay on jobs and toward the job service who was said not to be willing to work with refugees. Some intemperate things were said which made close cooperation with the job service and with refugees difficult for a time.

Encouraged by American friends and advisors, the refugees formed an organization and applied for a grant to provide some social services for themselves. Through SRS itself they did receive a grant to do this.

At the same time the International Rescue Committee, Inc. one of the major sponsors of the refugees in this area decided to open an office to provide service to their sponsorees and to apply for a grant to provide job counseling since the Missoula Technical Center staff had not been able to do this and

teach English too.

Through the summer, 1979 the service system had not changed any of its major elements. Refugees continued to arrive and the expectation was that there would be a large influx in late 1979. Agencies and volunteers tried to plan for this influx. The Missoula Technical Center advisory council continued to be the forum for discussion of refugee problems. During the summer meetings of this council the consensus of members of that council was that jobs and transportation were the major problems of the refugees. Problems teaching English and providing job counseling were discussed frequently and at length. Although there was consensus on some of the problems, especially transportation, no steps were taken to solve them.

The welfare department social worker was still recognized by many of the agencies as the most knowledgeable person about the refugees and as the person to call when any kind of problem arose. For example, the grade schools called her with any kind of discipline problem and made all arrangements through her where children were to be enrolled for the 1979-80 school year. The Missoula Technical Center English language teachers arranged with her when new arrivals were to be admitted to their program. With many refugees joining their families here, and with many

refugees becoming self-sufficient the kinds of social service needs shifted away from immediate dependence on the social worker toward a need for some one to coordinate services and see that programs were arranged which would meet larger needs. Because misunderstandings continued to create conflict between the social worker and the refugees, the distance between her and the refugees continued to grow. An acceptable translator and money to pay her were finally found in September, 1979.

In October, 1979 the Lao Family Community, Inc., Missoula Branch and the International Rescue Committee, Inc. both opened their offices and began providing services for refugee families. A meeting of many community agencies was held in November to try to delineate areas of responsibility between agencies. The end result of this was a sharply curtailed focus of responsibility for the social worker but by no means an elimination of responsibilities. With the influx of refugees continuing and increasing there was more than enough need to keep all agencies working overtime. The essential difference was that the social worker was no longer the only general service provider whose only responsibility was working with refugees. Both the refugees and the other agencies had other workers they could turn to for help and advice.

During December a situation arose in which the social worker made some decisions about a health problem which were not properly within her scope of responsibilities as perceived by the other agencies and which were perceived by the refugees as an infringement of their rights.

During December also the regional director of refugee services from Denver met with personnel from agencies in Missoula who were receiving federal money to provide services. He insisted that all agencies meet regularly to coordinate their services and to solve the problems such as transportation that were not properly within the scope of any one agency. Each agency appointed some staff member to handle this task. The welfare department was represented by supervisory personnel as were all agencies except the Missoula Technical Center. This group which meets in the offices of the LFC/IRC, has supplanted the Missoula Technical Center advisory board as the forum for discussing refugee problems. The citizen volunteers who had continued to function on the Missoula Technical Center board were elected to the board of directors of the LFC and continue to provide advice and support for refugees from that position.

As of the end of January, 1980, the social service network consisted almost entirely of paid staff working in agencies of one sort or another.

Some of the personnel in general service agencies had no other function than the providing of refugee services; some of the agencies had no other function. The few volunteers who had continued to function regularly were absorbed into some of the agencies or organizations.

### Network Theory

The theory of networks has been increasingly used by social anthropologists in studies of complex societies. The term was first used by Radcliffe-Brown (1952) when he suggested that actually existing social structure should be the focus of study by anthropologists and that this social structure is made up of the network of existing social relations.

Barnes' work on a Norwegian fishing village (1954) is commonly considered to be the seminal work defining networks and demonstrating their use as a tool for describing social structure. Barnes saw a network as a social field made up of relations between people; the relations were defined by criteria underlying the field. In the Norwegian parish these were neighborhood and friendship with kinship and economic ties also of



importance. The network is unbounded and is without leadership or central focus.

A sub-unit of a network defined by Barnes is a "set" of people. The set centers on a single person called ego and consists of people classified by him according to certain criteria. The set is not a group as defined in the social sciences but is a bounded entity of people connected with ego by one or more links.

Bott in her study of family networks in London (1957) uses the term "network" to cover both "network" and "set" as defined by Barnes. She uses a family group as ego and analyzes a bounded entity of individuals and families centered on ego.

These early works on network have formed the base from which other anthropologists have built. Many people studying complex societies have found it a useful tool for analyzing social interaction or social structure in situations in which groups or associations have not formed or in which significant social interaction takes place outside of groups.

Mayer (1965) uses the network concept to study an election campaign in the Dewas district of Madhya Pradesh State in India. He develops the concept of "action set" as a type of quasi-group based on an ego

as a central organizing focus. Members of the action set have a purposive link with the central ego and may have few lateral links between each other. Ego is a focus for getting something done--in Mayer's case getting the Congress party's candidate elected. Mayer distinguishes between links from the candidate outward which may be based on many criteria and the inward links which are all the same in an action set--support for the candidate in the Dewas election example.

In this paper I am suggesting that the lateral links in the action set--the links between members--are a significant factor in the functioning of an action set. I think that the people involved in the refugee resettlement effort in Missoula constitute an action set in Mayer's terms with ego the refugees as a group in the way that Bott used a family as ego. The purpose is the resettlement effort with everyone in the action set connected with ego at least through participation in the resettlement effort. Some of the people involved in the action set are also members of groups--agencies, churches and so on. This is one more link between them but is not the only significant link. The criteria underlying the social field in this case are primarily service to refugees--how much job overlap there is between network members--and personal friendship between members. If people must work

together constantly but don't like each other much they have a moderate bond. If they're quite good friends in dissimilar jobs they'll have a moderate link within this action set. Most of the nodes in this set are also groups as ego is a group in this case. For example, Head Start is an agency several of whose personnel have contact with different network members. However, they can be considered a single node in the same way that Bott's family can be considered a single ego.

In spite of Mayer's specific terminology separating "network," "set," and "action set" common usage seems to be to refer to all of these as networks. In this paper therefore I will be discussing an action set as defined by Mayer but will adopt the common terminology and call it a network.

People or agencies are included in this network because they have been identified as service providers in one of two ways. If a person or agency was mentioned by more than two refugees as providing some kind of help or if they attended two or more meetings concerned with refugee resettlement services I have included them in this network or action set. Since I am concerned in this paper with the lateral links between providers I have not diagrammed nor discussed the links with ego except as I have described the

# Network Analysis of Relationships Between Service Providers

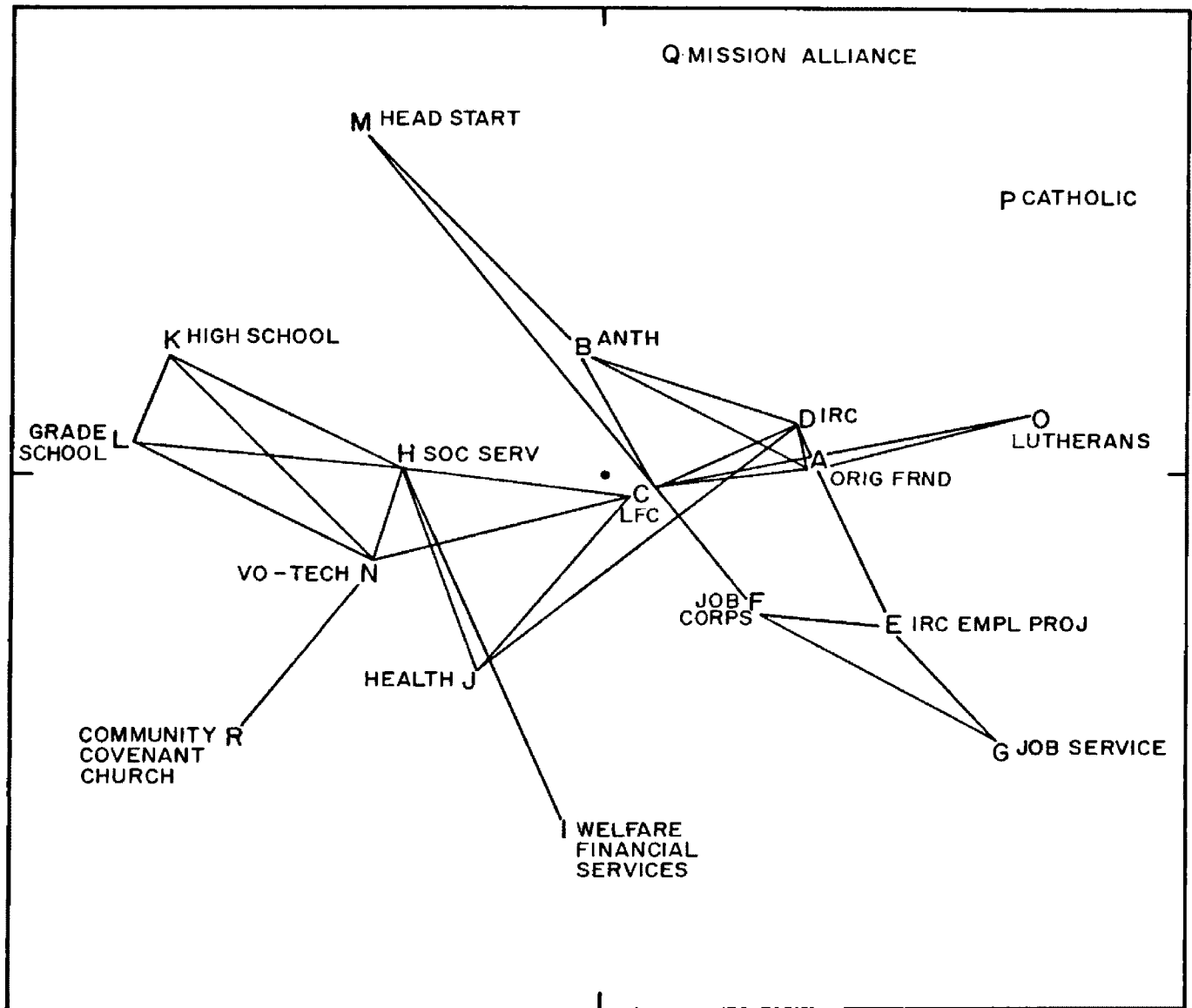


Figure 1

## Service Providers: Paired Relationships

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
Frnds	A	●																	
Anth	B	6	●																
LFC	C	7	7	●															
IRC	D	7	6	7	●														
Empl	E	3	2	6	7	●													
J Corp	F	3	6	7	5	3	●												
J Serv	G	1	1	2	2	3	4	●											
Soc Serv	H	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	●										
Finan	I	2	1	3	2	2	1	1	6	●									
Health	J	2	2	5	4	3	3	1	5	3	●								
Hi Schl	K	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	4	1	1	●							
Grd Schl	L	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	4	1	3	3	●						
Head St	M	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	●					
Vo Tech	N	3	3	4	3	4	3	1	7	2	3	3	2	1	●				
Luthr	O	4	2	3	5	3	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	●			
Cath	P	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	●		
Mis Aln	Q	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	●	
Com Cov	R	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	1	1	1	6	2	1	1	●
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R

Table I

services provided. The link with the refugees as clients must be assumed to exist for each node on the map.

The map of the network or action set (Figure 1) was generated by computer based on information from my observations and interviews. Each node was paired and rated by me as to how close or distant a relationship I judged each pair to have. 1 indicated no relationship or strong dislike; 7 was the strongest possible link; 0 was used if I did not know what connection existed if any. (Table 1) On the map generated from these pairings how close one node is to another indicates how close a bond there is between them. A line indicates a link; the shorter the line the stronger the bond. The map is a map in two dimensional space of the relationships among the service providers based on my evaluation. My evaluation is based on ethnographic observations and interviews. This map then is a map of my perception of the lateral links in the service provider network or action set.

## Description of Network Members

The following format has been used to describe the nodes and the links between them:

1. Program name and basic activity
2. Personnel involved with refugees
3. Eligibility criteria for service
4. Description of service
5. Links with other service providers

### A. Original Friends and Volunteers

From the very beginning of refugee influx into Missoula in 1975, a core of friends and volunteers have been prime movers in the resettlement effort, having become involved originally as members of their church sponsoring refugee families or as people with some other connection to the Hmong. In late 1975 they met the first refugees off the planes and have been continually involved with refugees ever since.

Originally they were involved with a mad scramble to find housing, clothing, food, and medical help where ever it could be scraped up. In 1976 the press of refugees was such that some of these people met with the welfare department to convince them to extend their services to the refugees. Since then and continuing until now these original volunteers have often served as a liaison between the refugees and agencies or sponsors. They are often the first people the refugee leaders turn to for advice on dealing with Americans

and one of them is often a supporting figure at any kind of meeting with Americans.

Their attitude has been one of constant friendship and support for refugee families. In dealing with any kind of problem in connection with refugee services, some members of this original group of volunteers have been able to keep the main goal in mind and remain at the same time conciliatory and avoid confrontations. They have been very influential in getting the Hmong to represent themselves at public meetings and to express their own opinions about the kinds of services needed. They have tended to stress defusing antagonism between agencies and refugees when offering advice to refugees on how to solve a problem but have consistently supported refugee viewpoints.

This group of volunteers' closest link within the network is with the LFC as they have been dependable friends and advisors for several years. Links with the IRC is quite close since many functioned as volunteers for IRC sponsored families and now work for IRC in Missoula. Some have close relationships with other voluntary agencies too. As fellow members of the LFC board of directors, some members of this group have developed close links with the U of M Anthropology Department and with the Job Corps counselor. Having been involved with refugee services for so long, this



group has connections at least minimally with almost all service providers.

#### B. The U of M Anthropology Department

The University of Montana Anthropology Department became involved with the refugees initially through interest in doing social science research. Both faculty members and students interested in social anthropology have participated in projects studying and interpreting Hmong culture. By virtue of this some have been in a position to be consulted by Hmong for advice on how to deal with various aspects of American culture, including how to deal with public agencies. Interpreting Hmong culture to Americans has been another function. On the whole, they have encouraged the refugees to form their own association to provide needed services for themselves. A museum exhibit at the Missoula Museum of the Arts, a public panel discussion and a short book, Montana Hmong are some aspects of this interpretation of Hmong culture to the public prepared or coordinated by members of the Anthropology Department. As of January, 1980 they are working with a board of elders of the Hmong community who are writing an account of child-raising and education practices in traditional Hmong culture. This is part of the Lao Family Community's public education

project. Attitude toward refugees is basically that of social scientists interested in research and is different in this way from that of service providers.

One department member was a member of the vo-tech advisory council while it was still functioning and is now a member of the LFC board of directors. Other than these links, a relationship has developed with the original volunteers especially through encouraging the refugees to form their own association to deal with public organizations.

#### C. Lao Family Community, Inc., Missoula Branch

One of the earliest Indochinese arrivals in Missoula is executive director of the Lao Family Community, Inc. which has opened an office in Missoula to provide orientation services to new refugees. He was one of the first Hmong to live in Missoula, having come here as an exchange student in 1973. When the government of Laos fell in 1975, his wife and infant son were the first refugees to arrive in Missoula. He has come to be recognized by both Hmong and Americans as a spokesman for the refugees in Missoula. He was a prime mover in applying for the grant from the SRS state office to open an office for the Lao Family Community, Inc., Missoula Branch and was elected by the Hmong heads of families as its director. This office

opened in early October, renting office space next to the IRC office. The LFC is set up to provide basic cultural orientation to newly arriving refugees, to provide family counseling in the case of family disruption, to coordinate refugee services with other agencies and to provide information for the public concerning the refugees.

Any refugee is eligible for help from the Lao Family Community. LFC begins looking for housing, clothing and such things as soon as word arrives from Bangkok that a family is on the way. People are eligible for service as long as they need it. I should stress that the service provided by this agency is actually provided by the entire refugee community and is co-ordinated by the office staff. They carry out some of the projects, refugee volunteers do others. Meetings are held periodically to discuss problems, what should be done, policies and so on. If problems arise, the director is usually responsible for dealing with outside agencies as spokesman.

Links are with almost all other service providers, their strength reflecting whether or not a person or agency works closely with LFC or reflecting personal friendship. Three links are very close. The LFC director has known one of the original volunteers for several years and has come to depend on him for much

advice and public support. A similar relationship is with the U of M Anthropology Department although it is not of as long duration. Close ties link the personnel in the IRC office with the LFC for several reasons. The LFC and IRC share a suite of offices, take each other's phone calls when needed, translate for each other when needed and consult on many kinds of problems. The IRC staff from Seattle who coordinated work here until their local office opened in October, depended upon local refugee leaders for communication about the needs of the local refugees. IRC was one of the agencies which has been most supportive when refugees have had difficulties and so have been called upon for help more often than many others. In turn, they have depended upon the LFC director to take care of many local arrangements. This working arrangement had often involved local refugee leaders, American volunteers and IRC working together.

A working link has been established with the public health department, with the Missoula Technical Center ESL program and with the social service staff at the welfare department reflecting the importance of these programs in refugee lives. Representatives from these agencies and LFC and IRC meet twice monthly to coordinate activities.

The LFC has some relationship with almost all service providers in any way working with refugees since the office and staff are considered by both refugees and Americans to be representative spokesmen for the refugees. How strong a link is with any one provider reflects primarily how much job overlap there is between LFC and other people or agencies.

#### D. International Rescue Committee, Inc.

The IRC opened its Missoula office in October 1979 to provide resettlement services for refugees. Any refugee family is eligible to receive services. Money is given only to refugees sponsored by IRC except that IRC will help a family deal with their own sponsor to obtain money if they need help. The IRC works very closely with the LFC so that any family who needs some sort of emergency help gets it.

The Missoula IRC office has two major focuses: resettlement in the community and family reunification and sponsorship. Through the reunification and sponsorship program any refugee family can seek to get their family members out of refugee camps or any community member including a refugee can sponsor a family to come to the U.S. This involves paperwork more than anything else in the local office.

The resettlement program involves the entire gamut of services from meeting a family at the airport through planning with the family for education, health care and immediate needs to long range resettlement plans including job training, relocation if needed and so on. Since the press of new refugees is so great in Missoula, IRC has begun to focus attention on the problem of getting refugees to settle in other parts of the state as one of their goals.

Part of the function of this office is education of the community and coordination of services with other agencies or individuals. Although this office is new and some of the personnel are new to Missoula, the IRC has been a presence in Missoula for some time. A representative from Seattle came to Missoula periodically and they dealt through the man now director of LFC and others extensively.

An important aspect of the IRC program in their literature is self-help for clients. In Missoula this has definitely been translated into encouragement for the refugees to participate in solving problems and to organize to meet their own needs. Emphasis is on respect for the refugees own way of doing things and on careful communication with the refugees.

Links are strongest with the LFC and Employment Project. Since all agencies receiving federal funds have begun meeting to coordinate activities, stronger ties have developed with the Health department and the ESL staff at the Missoula Technical Center. Some of the original volunteers have strong ties to the IRC as local volunteers were sometimes contacted by the IRC to help refugee families before the local office was opened.

One of the IRC staff was also part of the original core of volunteers. IRC has occasional contact with most of the groups working with the refugees.

#### E. IRC/NEW Employment Project

The IRC/NEW Employment Project is funded directly by the Denver Region office as a special grant program. It operates under the auspices of the IRC and occupies the same office.

The project is funded for one year with the goal in this time to get 60 jobs. Some refugees can expect to learn a language and a job skill well enough to compete in the job market. For these, they are working up resumes and teaching them how to be interviewed and so on.

Others will very possibly not be able to compete. Contracting for home and yard work and some similar things may be a way to achieve financial independence. This is another direction the Employment Project staff are looking for jobs for refugees.

The strongest ties of this staff are with the IRC and the LFC since they work out of the same office and translate for each other and so on. With the Missoula Technical Center ESL program they have worked out a "job vocabulary" class and they try to work together to evaluate the job-related skills of the advanced ESL students. They have some links too with the job service program office.

#### F. Trapper Creek Job Corps Center

An education counselor at Trapper Creek Job Corps Center in Darby has been very active in getting young men and a few girls in to the Job Corps program. He has a personal interest in the Hmong refugees because of his military experience in Southeast Asia and is a personal friend to the refugees rather than having contact initially through his job. Because of his friendship for the Hmong, he has made serious effort to encourage their participation in the Job Corps.



Any young man or woman between the ages of 16-23 who is not in high school or is not adequately employed is eligible for Job Corps. They are referred through the local job service office.

Although it is located in Darby, the Trapper Creek Job Corps must be considered part of the Missoula service program since so many of the Missoula Hmong teen-agers have participated. A few girls have gone to other Job Corps centers but with limited success. Also the education counselor has participated in local meetings of the Missoula Technical Center advisory council and of the board of directors of the LFC.

The Trapper Creek Job Corps Center has about 50 Hmong young men there now out of a total population of about 150. They are from many parts of the U.S. not just from Missoula but do include several youth from Missoula. This center is run by the Forest Service.

The program includes education and job training in several different vocations. Each new corpsman is assessed shortly after his arrival and a program of education and vocational training is worked out with the young man. If a corpsman graduates from the program, he has a GED certificate and training for a job. He is paid a small amount while training and may earn money while fighting fires and such things. In a

few cases the Job Corps may send a corpsman for further training or college education after completion of the program. This is happening in the case of at least one young Hmong man who is being sent to college by the Job Corps.

The educational program is designed for individual teaching and learning and includes an ESL class. The vocational programs includes building maintenance, carpentry, masonry, cooking, and mechanics. The corpsmen may switch vocational areas if they wish after they have started one.

Generally two years is needed to complete the course. Once the corpsman leaves he is no longer the responsibility of the Job Corps but of the job service who originally referred him. They are expected to report whether or not they have placed a youth in a job. But actually the staff in the education department of the Job Corps, including the one education counselor and several others, are very much involved in helping find jobs and keeping the young men working when an obstacle arises. For example, fairly recently the counselor and Mua Cha visited a Job Corps graduate who was working in Garrison. The young man wanted to quit his job so he could go to Minnesota to help his brother who had just arrived in the U.S. If the young man quit his job he would not be re-hired the

next summer but if he stayed just a few weeks he would be laid off for the winter anyway and would have a good job the next year. In this case a counselor was doing some job counseling which probably secured the man's job but which isn't required by the guidelines of the Job Corps. Other staff members in the education department spoke of similar contact with corpsmen who had graduated.

Links with other network members is necessarily limited because of the distance involved from Missoula. Link with the Job Service is moderate because of job contact; relationship with the LFC is quite strong. Some of the original volunteers, the U of M Anthropology Department, and the Missoula Technical Center staff are acquainted with the Job Corps counselor because of his participation in the Missoula Technical Center advisory council and because he is also one of the LFC board members.

#### G. Job Service Program Office

This office includes such programs as CETA, WIN, Job Corps referrals, world of Work training and similar programs. Any kind of education and training program for people who are not yet job ready are included in the program office. This office is connected with the State Employment Service but is a separate office.

More refugees have participated in CETA and in Job Corps than in any other program to the best of my knowledge. Through CETA (Concentrated Employment and Training Act) among refugees have been employed in jobs in a variety of agencies and businesses in which CETA pays their salary to give them job experience and a foot in the door for future jobs. WIN is a similar program designed for people who are receiving welfare payments. World of Work is an intensive class in job related skills such as how to dress, how to be interviewed, being prompt and so on.

Working with clients who are hard to place is run of the mill to staff at the Job Program Office. They make no particular distinction for refugees one way or the other, dealing with them in a fairly straight-forward manner.

Links are not strong with many other agencies except Job Corps, to whom they make many referrals. Some of the staff in the program office are paid through education funds rather than Department of Labor moneys. This means that some of the program money is channeled through the Missoula Technical Center. This does not make for too close of a link with the Missoula Technical Center ESL program, however, since they each view their services as very separate from each other. The IRC Employment Project staff work fairly closely

with the Program Office to get some of the refugees who have fairly good language ability into training or jobs. Other than these the links within the network are minimal.

#### H. Missoula County Social Services

The Missoula County Welfare Department, Division of Social Services provides a variety of social services for refugees through a grant provided through the State Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services. Any refugee is eligible for social service from the refugee social worker with no regard for financial status. The financial services are a separate department of the welfare department with a mutual director three steps up the table of organization. Families are eligible for service as long as they want or need service. The county welfare department provides a social worker and a social service aide who provide direct service to clients. In addition, the regional director of SRS has been very involved in coordinating services with other agencies.

The social worker has provided almost every kind of immediate service to new arrivals from help in finding housing and clothes to referrals to and even transportation to a variety of services and programs. Arranging for and providing funds for day care has been

one of her major functions. The day care services arranged by the social worker are available through state funding of social services. Eligibility for day care is on the basis of income or special need. Care can be provided only in licensed day care centers or homes with the provider paid directly by the state SRS for services. This program is no different for refugees than for others who qualify except that all refugee children are eligible under the special need category and so the day care providers are paid more per day to take care of them. Parents ordinarily must be working or attending ESL classes to qualify for day care services. Until the LFC and IRC opened their Missoula offices, the social worker was almost the only full time service worker for all the refugees in the area.

With the opening of the other two offices, some of the services were taken over by them and some services such as finding housing are now done by the families of the new arrivals rather than by any agency. The primary emphasis of the social worker now is information and referral for the new families, with continued emphasis on finding and funding day care.

The social worker generally meets each new family shortly after their arrival, having been called by a relative. She goes to their home or wherever they are

staying and fills out with them all the forms for welfare financial eligibility, school registration forms for grade and high school, registration forms for Missoula Technical Center. At that time she calls all the places the family will need to go for services such as the food stamp office, the Health Department, doctors offices, social security and any one they will need to see right away. If necessary, she will arrange transportation and day care at this time as well. In the past she tried to find housing, clothing, household goods and other things of this sort often going herself to pick up donations and to deliver them to families who need things. When there is any difficulty with a homeing child at school, the social worker has generally been the contact person for the schools and has tried to deal with these situations. She has worked with the Missoula Technical Center to some extent in job counseling situations and with churches and other groups interested in sponsoring families.

The social service aide provides translator services and transportation to many of the appointments arranged by the social worker.

The social worker has been extremely willing to extend service to any refugee or to see that they were helped by some other person or group. She has worked long hours and done many things above and beyond the

call of duty. On some occasions, however, some serious misunderstandings have arisen which have limited her effectiveness in doing anything other than the initial information and referral services she now provides. The needed coordination of activities with other agencies has been generally taken over by the regional director of SRS who participates in program planning and application of funds as well as communication with state SRS as needed.

The social service division has moderate links with almost all agencies in the network. This reflects the importance of the service and the willingness of the staff to be useful to anyone. Links are not closer in some cases because of misunderstandings in the past. A division of labor within the agency now keeps working relationships smooth.

#### I. Eligibility Staff at the Welfare Department

The assistant director of the welfare department, the eligibility supervisor, the intake eligibility workers and one of the eligibility case workers have all either participated in public meetings to coordinate refugee services or have been mentioned by refugees as service providers. The eligibility staff has asked for money to hire one person to handle the entire refugee caseload for financial services.



Refugees are eligible for financial assistance through 100% federal funding of their welfare grants. They get Aid to Families with Dependent Children, medicaid, and food stamps based on the same rules and eligibility requirements as any other Missoula resident with one exception. Single men without dependents are eligible for AFDC grants under the laws setting up refugee welfare programs. Refugees are no longer eligible for welfare payments when their earned income is above the established guidelines which apply to all Montana residents. The eligibility staff processes the paper work involved with opening financial assistance for a refugee family and does the checking and recertification necessary to keep the proper records up to date. the welfare department social worker fills out the initial intake forms with a family and then the eligibility staff takes over from there. This is not a particularly visible service but is handled quite efficiently.

Eligibility staff has attended public meetings occasionally to try to clarify rules regarding reporting income or various other things. Occasional problems have come up with people not getting a check because the post office couldn't distinguish between similar names or for some other reason of this kind. Eligibility staff have gone to some trouble to get

these things straightened out and none has caused more than a passing problem to my knowledge.

The eligibility staff has close links with the social worker for refugees and with the social service aide who often translates for them. The social worker often does the initial intake work for financial assistance for refugee families when they first arrive. The financial assistance staff occasionally works through the Lao Family Community to explain problems or regulations or things of that sort. Otherwise they have little or no connection with any other network member.

#### J. Health Department

Health care is one of the major needs of the newly arriving refugees since their escape from Laos and stay in Thailand in refugee camps have usually not been under the best of health conditions. An HEW grant, channeled through State SRS partly defrays the cost of providing health services to the refugees in the Missoula area.

Any public health service available to all Missoula County residents is available for the refugees as well. This includes outpatient and immunization clinic, home health care, well-child clinic, parent

education classes and several services. The WIC nutrition program for pregnant women and children under five and the well-child clinic are restricted to families below 195% of poverty level. The other services are available without regard to income.

Some services are provided specifically for refugees. Screening for TB is done for all new arrivals since TB is endemic in Southeast Asia. Immunizations are given to all new arrivals since most of the refugee camps have poor records even if they did carry out full immunization series. All refugees are checked for parasites and are treated if necessary. A bi-lingual health aide is available to explain health procedures, provide transportation for doctor appointments and to follow up on any prescribed treatment.

A class in parent education specifically for refugees includes health procedures, a tour of the hospital and general orientation to American medical care for those who are going to have babies. The nursing staff has written a booklet on basic self-care knowledge which they have translated into Lao for refugee use.

Strong links are with the Lao Family Community, the IRC. The social service aide and the public health aide both work together very closely to provide transportation and translation for whatever appointments the refugees have and so have a fairly strong tie. The public health department is on call if the grade schools need any help with health related refugee matters.

#### K. Missoula County High Schools

Services for refugee students in the Missoula High Schools are provided under the Title I program in Hellgate High School and in an ESL class which is available to students at both public high schools. Title I is part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act which provides for remedial education services for all students below a certain achievement level in schools which qualify. The ESL class is provided by the high school district out of district funds.

A school qualifies for Title I based on the income level of all the families in its area based on how many students qualify for free school lunch. A student within a qualifying school qualifies for remedial services if he is lower than the 40th tile on standard achievement tests. Virtually all refugees are eligible

for remedial services because of language difficulties. At Hellgate, Title I has a regularly scheduled class in reading skills and study skills, provides tutoring, and general counseling to help students in their school work.

Very recently the school district has added an ESL class to their regular curriculum which is in addition to the Title I services. The ESL class is available for Sentinel students but the Title I services are not. The ESL classes are one hour classes with students assigned on the basis of their ability.

The staff at the high school seems to deal with the refugees as part of the job presenting no great problem to speak of. The strong motivation of the students to learn and their strong family support to succeed in education make them somewhat easier to deal with than some of the other Title I students. Generally they are more mature than the American students in the program and usually have a good self concept unlike some of the American or minority students in Title I. Because of these things the staff generally enjoys working with the young students.

Links with other agencies are quite limited. Contact with the Missoula Technical Center personnel is friendly because all are part of the same school system

but they do not have much job overlap since the high school now has an ESL class. The welfare department social worker enrolls the students at the beginning of the year and theoretically has been the contact person if anything has come up which couldn't be handled by the student. None of these things have ever come up.

#### L. Missoula School District 1

School District 1 had 104 refugee students enrolled in grades K-8 at the end of December 1979. In Jan 1980 they were proposing to provide instruction in English as a second language for all refugee children at least three times a week beginning in the second semester of the 1979-80 school year.

The school district curriculum director and curriculum coordinator have developed the proposal which has been accepted by the school board. At the end of January they are in the process of hiring a certified instructor in foreign language who will plan the details of the program. This person need not be bi-lingual in any refugee language. Federal money, which is channeled through the State Office of Public Instruction, will be available in March and will fund the program retroactive to October, 1979. Any grade school student with limited English-speaking ability is eligible for participation in the program.

Until now, Title I classrooms have been providing any special help the refugee children have needed. The new program will provide ESL instruction at least three times a week outside of the regular classroom. The curriculum will include oral and written communication skills, cultural heritage and special help for students who are having difficulties with the concepts of their classroom subjects.

The social worker from the county welfare department has been the closest link to the school district in the network of service providers. For at least the last year she has enrolled the new refugee students and has been the person the schools have contacted if there have been any problems with refugee children. According to school personnel, the LFC has been consulted about their recommendations for the ESL program as have the Missoula Technical Center ESL staff and the high school ESL teacher. The school system has only limited contact with any other service provider.

#### M. Missoula Head Start

As an agency Head Start has been involved with pre-school education for refugee children for three years. This year 12 of the 60 children are Hmong.

The Head Start director and the education coordinator are involved with overall planning; a social worker enrolls the students. A Hmong-English speaking teacher's aide has been hired to help with some classroom activities in which Hmong children are involved.

The refugee children are eligible to participate in Head Start in exactly the same way as are all members of the community. Three to five year old children from low-income families are eligible. Additionally, children with some kind of language difficulty are eligible for Head Start.

The Head Start general goal is to encourage a strong self-image in all their children. To this end they have developed an education plan with a special emphasis on language development for Indochinese children. This plan includes a bi-lingual language component which involves a Hmong speaker to work with all the children in Hmong and then in English. This is intended to help the refugee children learn to speak English quickly and to help all the children learn to respect Hmong language and culture.

Head Start personnel are very receptive to the participation of refugee children in their program and have had a fairly high degree of success in getting



parent participation in their parent programs. Their expressed attitude is that this attention to refugee needs is simply part of the job of pre-school education which Head Start exists to do. No increased funding was asked for to develop and implement the special program for refugee children.

The Head Start program as a single node in this network has several links with other network members but these are not strong. The social worker from the welfare department makes virtually all the referrals to the Head Start program. The director of the LFC and the U of M Anthropology Department coordinated a cultural awareness program and refugee parent/staff meeting for Head Start last spring. It was this meeting which laid the ground work for the current bi-lingual education plan. Conspicuous by its absence is any link with the school system.

#### N. Missoula Technical Center English class

The Missoula Technical Center has provided English-as-a Second-Language instruction for adult refugees since fall, 1976. The ESL program is co-ordinated by the director of the Learning Center and employs three full-time certified teachers. In addition, volunteers of one sort or another either teach or tutor. Most of these are from the university.

As of the end of January there were 86 students in the daytime classes. Night classes are held for those who can not attend during the day.

Any refugee is eligible for English lessons and any head of household receiving AFDC benefits must attend either ESL classes or some job training classes. The program is funded under the provision of the IRAP which provides money for English language and employment skills for refugees. All adult refugees are eligible to participate with no time limit on how long they may attend at this time.

There are five levels of classes with students progressing at their own pace from one to the next. The first level for beginners is divided into those either literate or illiterate in their own language. Level 2 has illiterate people who have reasonably good oral skills but who are not going to learn to write and read except minimally. These people also participate three mornings a week with the group from the Community Covenant Church in a tutoring and survival skills program.

Level 3 is an advancement of the program for the literate beginners and includes reading, writing and math. Level 4 a further step for the same group. Level 5 is called English for Employment. The most

advanced students learn job-related vocabulary and job seeking skills. They also have an English grammar class and a class to prepare for their G.E.D.

The night class, which goes year round, is generally a tutoring program to help up-grade skills.

During 1978 and 1979 the vo-tech had an advisory council made up of refugees, representatives of other service agencies and interested members of the community. This was the major forum for coordination of all refugee affairs in the whole area. No one individual was responsible for taking action on problems which were brought up but most problems and points of view were represented during discussions. In December, 1979, at the suggestion of the HEW representative from Denver, all agencies receiving federal money to provide refugee services began to meet. This seemed to supersede the vo-tech advisory council which quit meeting.

Because of their central role in providing the forum for the advisory council, the vo-tech ESL program has at least minimal links with the Job Corps counselor, the original group of volunteers, the health department. Because they are in the same school system, the teachers have links with the Missoula County High Schools and with School District 1. LFC

and IRC staff meet with the teachers at the meetings of federally funded agencies. The IRC Employment project staff coordinates some activities with the English for Employment class. The strongest link is with the social worker from the welfare department who conducts much of her business at the English classes. Much of the initial paperwork for enrolling people in the ESL classes is done by her and some decisions about programs have been communicated to refugees through her.

#### D. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services

The Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service office in Billings is the Montana branch of the Lutheran International voluntary agency which sponsors many refugees in Montana. A part-time worker in Missoula works with the unaccompanied minors program which provides foster care for parentless children. At this time this does not involve any Hmong youth. The Hmong families sponsored by the Lutheran Services are served through the Billings office or by local volunteers.

The agency has some link with the IRC and with the LFC since these agencies help Lutheran-sponsored refugees if needed. Some of the original volunteers have fairly close contact with this agency as well

having originally become involved through the Lutheran church.

P. U.S. Catholic Conference

Catholic Charities is the Montana arm of the United States Catholic Conference, one of the international voluntary agencies involved with refugee services. LFC is the only agency with whom the USCC has any link. For families sponsored by USCC, money and services are channeled through the Catholic Charities office staff. The state director comes to Missoula on occasion from the Catholic Charities office in Helena to handle any major problems if they come to his attention. There is no particular person in Missoula to handle USCC refugee matters. Although on a national and international level they are an active refugee agency and although they are one of the major sponsors of families in this area, the USCC keeps a very low profile. When needed the LFC will loan money to a family sponsored by USCC and be reimbursed by the Catholic Charities office.

Q. Christian and Missionary Alliance Church

The Alliance church has been involved in refugee affairs in particular because their church was the first Protestant sect to preach to the Hmong while they

were still living in the Southeast Asian mountains.

The pastor's wife particularly deals with refugees although many members of the church are involved in either finding clothing and household goods or in teaching Christian principles to the refugees who choose to participate in their classes. Any refugee may participate who chooses to do so.

The major kind of service the Alliance church provides is in the realm of teaching Christian principles although they have been active too in sponsoring families and finding housing, clothing, food and similar things. The church provides classes on Christianity in the Hmong language through a translator every Sunday in addition to regular Sunday services. A native Hmong pastor has very recently come to the church to handle refugee affairs. As of early October about 25 Hmong were participating in the classes although very few attended church services. A major effort on the part of the church was to increase social interaction between American and Hmong members of the church. This is partly an attempt to combat prejudice in the community. On a national and international level the Alliance church missionaries have been most active in devising a script for the Hmong language, and in translating the Bible into Hmong. Some of the books and stories they publish have been useful in teaching

the Hmong refugees to read and write and in teaching the Hmong language to Americans.

Links are not strong with any other agency. The LFC deals with the Alliance church occasionally. The welfare department social worker has had occasional contact with the pastor's wife.

## R. Community Covenant Church

This church is a recent addition to the network having been requested by a refugee family to sponsor their relatives. However, they seem to be seriously entering the service network. Besides sponsoring a Hmong family, some of their members are trying to learn Hmong, their church has been offered as a meeting place, church members are trying to set up a place for storing and distributing donations of clothing and household goods. The church members have set up a tutoring program for some of the vo-tech ESL students.

The attitude of the church members seems to be one of offering friendship as well as service; at least they seem to go to some trouble to try to encourage social contacts. They have links to the LFC, the IRC and to the welfare department social worker through trying to sponsor a family.

## Summary of Chapter II

Help for refugees in Missoula in December, 1975 was given by an original network of personally involved friends interacting with a few refugee families and providing immediate relief from cold or sickness or whatever.

In January, 1980 a network of agency personnel with official goals and constraints is interacting with a large, self-aware ethnic group providing some immediate relief but providing most help in a more impersonal manner and in some cases with no contact between the giver and receiver.

So that this information can be compared with the Haong goals for themselves the service system will be summarized in two parts: the services provided and the way of providing them.

Looking at the services provided for the refugees by public and private agencies and by individuals, it is possible to group the services into a few general categories.

Financial assistance is provided by sponsoring agencies such as IRC, USCC, Lutheran Social Services, and other voluntary agencies when families first arrive. The original volunteers provided financial



help when needed initially. The LFC and IRC can arrange financial help in emergencies. Most financial help is provided through the AFDC cash assistance program at the welfare department. Food stamps provide the money needed for food so food is no longer provided by any agency.

Clothes are either purchased with the initial money given to a family or are donated to families. Almost every agency distributes clothing as they get it. This is one constant from December, 1975 until now--more clothes are needed than can be purchased by each family and all people connected with the refugees gather and pass on clothing donations.

Housing is arranged by the relatives of the new arrivals or through the LFC, IRC or through individual sponsoring groups. The welfare department social worker was initially very active in finding housing.

Health care is arranged through or provided by the public health department and paid for through medical assistance from the welfare department.

Religious instruction is provided by the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church.

Job training and jobs are provided through the job corps, job service, and the IRC employment project, as well as through personal contact. To some extent the vo-tech ESL advanced class might be called job related training.

Education is provided by Head Start, grade and high schools and the vo-tech as well as the orientation classes provided by the LFC.

Coordination and planning of services comes about through the representatives on the committee of agencies receiving federal grants. Problems this group has identified but not solved are transportation and jobs.

Transportation is a problem for every single agency except those like Head Start who provide their own busses. Yet it is not an identified responsibility of any one agency nor is it something that refugees can be expected to handle entirely on their own. The planning committee has set transportation as its first order of business with most committee members working on possible solutions. As of the end of January no one solution had been found to transportation problems.

Jobs are the responsibility of three agencies in the network but finding them, training for them, and so on are recognized as by far the most difficult task of

any that faces refugees or service providers. A consensus of the coordinating committee is that the community cannot possibly absorb the number of potential workers given the state of the local economy. No agency or individual is responsible to do the kind of long range thinking which will be required if any refugees are to be resettled in other areas of the state where they can be absorbed into the labor force. The coordinating committee has agreed that this is a problem and has set it aside as unsolvable for the time being.

A third area of concern for the committee is coordination of services and overall planning as this was the impetus behind the forming of the committee. With all members heavily involved in their own specific jobs, this is done only to the extent that everyone does meet and they do now share information about each other's programs. All have agreed that it would be desirable if one form could be filled out for each family with the information needed by all agencies gathered once and shared by all. Carrying out a project of this sort has proved to be impossible so far since no agency can carry the whole burden even of running-off the forms much less assigning personnel to gather and present the information. Members of the committee have agreed that this would be a very useful

and efficient way to operate but have not been able to accomplish this.

The current system of providing all these services has evolved as difficulties arose. Each change in the system has come about in response to some kind of stress with any new configuration of the network being an attempt to solve some perceived problem.

In this case, every time stress has built up to the point of strong tension, the network has become more organized and impersonal in an attempt to solve the problem. For example, in late spring, 1976, some refugees needed medical care which they could not afford to pay for themselves and which the original volunteers could no longer afford to pay for either. Although it took several months, the volunteers eventually convinced the welfare and health departments to provide services for the refugees.

In December, 1979, a minor health problem, a personality conflict among service providers, and a strong suggestion from the HEW representative who controlled the purse strings combined to cause considerable shifts in the network. The vo-tech advisory council faded away, a group of supervisory personnel from agencies formed leaving out some direct service personnel in order to avoid conflicts, duties

were more clearly delineated among agencies and responsibility for dealing with some unattacked problems was settled somewhere.

In each case, the tensions interfering with work were solved or at least dealt with by a shift away from dependence on personal help and friendship toward organized, impersonal solutions. Those people originally involved in helping refugees have either made the transition happen or have dropped out once they were no longer needed or have become less and less central to the network.

On the one hand, for instance, from the beginning of the refugee influx into Missoula, the job corps counselor has been very influential in encouraging the refugees to organize and in encouraging service providers to organize to solve one kind of problem or another. He was instrumental in getting both HEW personnel and state SRS personnel to take an interest in the refugee situation here.

On the other hand, the social worker from the welfare department was an early provider of immediate relief, going to pick up and deliver donations of household goods, take people to the hospital and so on. In fact, her willingness to do these things while employed as an eligibility technician in the welfare

department was a major factor in causing the social services division to hire her in the first place in spite of her lack of the usual job qualifications. By continuing to operate on an extremely personal level when circumstances had changed considerably, she became less and less effective and was herself a source of stress for the entire service network.

The network map (Figure 1) showing lateral linkages among the service providers shows two groupings. It does not show changing relationships but rather shows the social structure as of January, 1980. The LFC with connections with almost all service providers is obviously central to this network. One grouping closely associated with LFC consists mainly of people and agencies who have encouraged the Hmong to organize to provide services for themselves. Another grouping includes several members who have given essential services to refugees but have tended not to recognize the legitimacy of the Hmong leadership and organization.

Outside the central groupings are several members who are peripheral to the two focal groups. These members may be peripheral because of ideology--the Missionary Alliance Church has a different conception of service than any other member, even the other churches. Or they may be peripheral because of lack of

job overlap. The welfare department financial eligibility division needs nothing from any other service providers and functions with little awareness of them. Others may be peripheral because they deliberately try to avoid participation in the conflict between the two focal groupings. Head Start works with both groups as needed but does not interact with any network members beyond the minimum required to carry out their own goals.

The two groupings which are part of the social structure indicate a source of stress still present within the network. There are overlapping links, however between the two groups. They are able to work together though not easily. The map shows LFC in a more central position in the network than is social services but does not of course suggest what direction any shifts will be.

The history of the development of the network suggests that this particular stress between groupings will continue. The social worker has continued to operate in the realm in which she was originally successful and has been unable to adjust to the reality of the refugees' organization serving as a focus and coordinating force for other network members. However, with the possible exception of some of the vo-tech staff, few others who work closely with her feel as

strongly as she does and most are willing to accept the central role of the LFC. Within SRS itself other staff have recognized the need to work closely with the refugee leadership. It is through SRS that the LFC is funded and the SRS regional director has provided much practical help and encouragement to the organization. The stress continues but it is unlikely to cause serious factions to develop without the addition of other stresses.

The continual press of new refugees is a factor to consider but it works both ways. All service providers have to work overtime to get people settled. With tempers frayed dealing with personality hassels is particularly annoying. If the tensions between the groups causes the clients to be served badly, serious tension may result.

However, there is so much work to do that there is no question of anyone feeling unneeded or put aside. Members of all the groupings are extremely hard and willing workers. It may not be necessary to compete for recognition within the network; there is plenty for everyone to do.

The social service network as it exists in January, 1980 is then, a system which has two major groupings of service providers plus some peripheral



members. But these groupings overlap considerably and continue to work together. This network has evolved to its present bureaucratic form from a more personal form in response to stress. Whenever the service providers have been unable to function adequately (in their own opinion) they have tried to solve the problem by becoming more bureaucratized--that is, more formal definition of duties, more impersonal service performed on a larger scale. The current network still contains tension with no immediate prospect for any one person or group to be accepted by all as the coordinator of services or the central focus.

## CONCLUSION

The Hmong refugees and the providers of services to refugees have general agreement on goals. They have differed in their understanding of how goals should be reached but during the time that the refugees have been in Missoula, each group has adjusted to the other's expectations.

In January, 1980 a network of agency personnel with official goals and constraints is interacting with a large, self-aware ethnic group and providing some immediate relief but providing most help in a more impersonal manner and in some cases with no contact between the giver and receiver.

The Hmong want to live peacefully in America in country houses large enough for the whole family, with yard and garden space, near other Hmong families and near enough to a medium sized town for at least some family members to go to school and work.

Interviews with families and single young men and women and observation of family gatherings suggest that with very little variation the Hmong in and around Missoula place strong emphasis on the importance of their group identity and on the importance of family. With emphasis on education, language skills and on jobs for at least some family members, the Hmong hope to

participate in the economic life of America while continuing to function as a group.

This ideal of their future is based on their past dealings with governments and societies in Asia. By maintaining their identity and retaining group values the Hmong have survived for several centuries in Chinese society and for more than a hundred years in Lao society. Their political structures, developed over centuries, are used by the group to adjust to life in America and to deal with American government. Since this political system was not initially recognized by the American government representatives, the Hmong have taken on more and more of the appearances which Americans associate with a legitimate political system. The refugee family group incorporated formally as the Lao Family Community, Missoula Branch. The man who was spokesman by group consensus was elected as group leader. The group applied for and received a grant to provide social services to refugees thereby acquiring legitimacy in the eyes of most Americans. The spokesman was hired as executive director of the organization and became a member of the social service network himself.

The goals of the group have remained the same as has their group identity and political structure. Under pressure from Americans, the group has made

changes in the way they present themselves and has thereby acquired legitimacy in the eyes of American service providers. Their organization, the Lao Family Community, is becoming both the focus for their group identity and the focus for American recognition of their political legitimacy.

The goals of the American service system are different in emphasis but do not conflict with the goals that the Hmong have for themselves. A service network provides initial help in finding clothing, housing, transportation and money. Health care is arranged. Orientation classes are held. Education and language instruction begin almost immediately. Once these things are taken care of emphasis shifts to preparation for jobs which will allow the refugees to fit smoothly into the economy of the community.

Initially provided by a small group of personal friends, the services are now provided by an impersonal network of agencies which is loosely coordinated by a committee of agency representatives. The system now includes the refugee organization as a focus for one segment of the service network. The system has evolved in response to stress becoming more bureaucratic and impersonal in an attempt to keep up with the need for services. Tension between those who recognize the legitimacy of the refugee political

structures and those who do not has provided impetus for changes in the American service system as well as in the outward form of the refugee political structures.

In general, the goals of Hmong refugees and the goals of American service providers have been similar. The emphasis is on keeping stress to a minimum by getting families settled. When some family members, usually household heads and young men, have language skills the emphasis shifts to jobs and services to effect smooth entry into the job market of the area.

It is possible that conflict between refugees and service providers in goals may arise over the question of jobs. The Hmong and Americans agree that jobs are essential to their smooth entry into the American economic and social system. And they both agree that this is most desirable. The Hmong, however, see jobs as a means to take care of their families--keeping them united and living in a place they can continue their traditional way of life. Setting aside family and group values in order to achieve economic success would be backwards. It is in this area that American service providers have shown the least awareness of cultural difference or of Hmong cultural values.

For the time being, this is not a conflict because the whole service system is focused on absorbing the new arrivals. The refugees who have been here long enough to be ready to enter the job market are either working or do not seriously expect to work for the most part. Those in Level 2 of the vo-tech ESL classes, for example, are not likely to seriously enter the labor force. The fifteen people in the ESL advanced class will soon be job-ready but it is possible that 15 people can be absorbed into the local labor force without serious problem. However, when the community can no longer absorb the potential workers this dilemma will be more apparent. Although the Hmong and the American service providers agree that it is desirable for the Hmong to enter the economic system, for the refugees this is important because it will allow them to maintain their family and group structure. They do not want to disrupt the family and group structure in order to enter the economic system. Few Americans have indicated any awareness of this potential dilemma.

It is in the means of reaching goals that the two groups have been dis-similar and in which they have each changed in response to the other during the last four years.

The Hmong have expected to deal with the American government using their traditional system. Having thought of themselves as a group within each village and having been dealt with as a village government by the governments of the nations in which they have lived, the Hmong expected to continue to govern themselves by consensus and to deal with outsiders through their chosen spokesman. They have tried to do that here with variable success. American service providers have not been used to recognizing the legitimacy of a group spokesman whose position is based on consensus.

When few refugees were here and service was a personal interaction, this was not a significant factor. When service began to be provided by more impersonal forces the Hmong tried to deal with the outside group using the system they had always used. Some of the Americans recognized the legitimacy of their system; many significant ones did not.

Because some service providers did not recognize their legitimacy, the Hmong with the advice of other Americans, took steps to have their spokesmen recognized. As the refugees incorporated and organized formally by American standards, more American service providers did accept the legitimacy of their spokesmen. Over a period of at least two years, this has been a

continual source of tension with each group adjusting to the expectations of the other when conflict made it apparent that their expectations did not coincide.

Now, the Hmong continue to make decisions and choose a spokesman in their traditional way as a group but they have the outward appearances which cause most Americans to consider their spokesman legitimate. The American service network now includes the refugee organization and the current groupings in the network suggest that those who do not recognize their legitimacy are in the minority.

Generally similar goals of the refugees and the service providers may give way to conflict as the need for jobs conflicts with the need for family and group cohesiveness. Dis-similar ways of reaching goals has been a source of conflict. This is lessening as the Hmong take on American appearances of legitimacy and the service providers recognize the legitimacy of their organization.

#### Future Research

In exploring the relationship between refugees and service providers in Missoula, some intriguing questions have come up which may be a base for further research.



An essential tension in this system revolves around the importance of group identity for the Hmong and the recognition of this by Americans. The LFC has become a symbol of ethnic identity for the Hmong and for the Americans who deal with them. The role that Americans have played in the development of this organization has been mentioned but has not been fully explored.

The diffuse organization of the service system has been mentioned as having some effect on the ability of the system to coordinate programs. Other communities have different approaches to service delivery with one agency responsible for all services. Which type of organization is more effective in operating refugee resettlement programs?

Some service workers here have suggested that the refugees in Missoula are under less stress than refugees in other parts of the country. Some say this is because the refugees here are eligible to receive language training and other services longer than those elsewhere. Others suggest that the strong group and family identity of the Hmong helps them adjust to American life more easily than families who were more urbanized and had less strong family ties. Whether or not there are fewer symptoms of stress among Missoula refugees and what effect if any the service system or

group identity have on this could usefully be explored.

The Hmong emphasis on education and the reaction of various education systems to the refugees could also be subject for further research. All the education organizations with the exception of Head Start are among the last to recognize the legitimacy of the L&C as representative of the refugees. What effect does this have on refugee education?

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